‘Tension, apprehension, and dissension have begun’: Crises of Identity in the Cold War Writings of Alfred Bester, 1950-1960

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Abstract

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Between 1950 and 1960, Alfred Bester produced numerous works which utilised his contemporary Cold War atmosphere in order to examine and extrapolate the current cultural state. The purpose of this thesis is to offer a reading of Bester's works which focuses exclusively on the portrayal of psychology and the exploration of identity crises in relation to the split self. Designed to demonstrate Bester's unique approach to the self as inherently split between the social and the personal, this thesis understands the Cold War as a collective neurosis, and uses this model as a framework for its examination of psychology. As such, this thesis aims to demonstrate that Bester's use of psychology expresses the universal nature of compulsions and literature's importance in depicting genuine human characters.

The impact of nuclear weapons and the Cold War state of anxiety, paranoia, and suspicion on the human psyche is widely recognised and examined through the lens of identity. However, Bester's particular approach utilises this understanding of identity to depict the reciprocal nature of individual and political psychology. One of the key arguments presented here is that Bester's portrayal of universal psychology is designed to mirror the Cold War state of tension and anxiety against individual psychological pressures. Conformity or isolation are extrapolated to exacerbate a loss of self that can only be regained through reconciliation between the public and private spheres. Thus, Bester's approach is designed to argue that such reconciliation is required in order to break down barriers of the 'other' and dissuade collective delusions of normality. This thesis argues that Bester's approach to psychology develops and foreshadows the growing awareness that individuals may not be in control of their own mind, and the importance of human understanding in extrapolating and predicting the future of society.

By depicting the Cold War as collective neurosis, Bester's works mirror social identity crises against individual crises in order to depict the impact of social influence and the place of the individual within society. Tracing the development of this approach, this thesis examines Bester's works chronologically from 1950 through 1960. With the intention of establishing Bester's commitment to his approach, this thesis has expanded beyond his fiction to include his non-fiction, such as letters, editorials, interviews, and essays, as well as crossing genre lines between his sf and mainstream writing. Not only is Bester's understanding of psychology thereby revealed and charted, but an exploration of the ability of various modes of writing to examine psychology is undertaken, as is an overview of the general literary atmosphere in which Bester was working.

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Contents

Introduction

The Cold War permeated American culture throughout the 1950s, both socially and psychologically. Though physical altercations had a clear impact, the psychological dimension of this conflict made domestic culture a greater breeding ground for the Cold War mentality due to the war's effect on the individual self within mass society. According to Christopher Newfield, 'Contemporaries called the Cold War a *W*ar of ideas, a struggle for the minds and wills of men, a thought war, a campaign of truth, a war of words, political warfare, nerve warfare, and indirect aggression.'[1] In addition, from 1950-53, McCarthyism and the Korean War simultaneously aroused domestic and international concerns regarding the nature of the 'other' and the potential spread of Communism. The remainder of the 1950s can be characterised by an atmosphere of conformity nurtured under Capitalist consumerism and the threat of nuclear war. With the notion of mutually assured destruction encouraging these aspects of society, literature sought ways in which to accurately portray contemporary American sentiment.

This thesis will focus on the works of Alfred Bester, written from 1950 to 1960. Alongside a number of short stories, essays, and other non-fiction, the novels examined will be *The Demolished Man* (1952), *Who He?* (1953), *The Stars My Destination* (1956-7), and *Tender Loving Rage* (1959 (published 1991)).[2] Bester is exceptionally positioned to be examined in regards to his approach to psychology and the conclusions that can be drawn regarding its relation to the Cold War considering the myriad of genres and media in which he has worked (e.g. comics, television, and radio, as well as literature). With the 1950s being the first decade after the start of the Cold War, concerns that arose would have still been nascent and thus fresh in the literary mind, allowing for new and extensive approaches. The start of the 1950s also corresponds with Bester's return to writing sf, having spent 1943-1949 writing for comic books and television, thereby creating a connection between the social/political situation and his literary career. Bester's return to science fiction

[1] Christopher Newfield, 'Cold War and Culture War', in *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*, ed. by Paul Lauter (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 72-95 (p. 76). Author's own emphasis.

[2] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996); Alfred Bester, *Who He?* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, [n.d.]); Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, ed. by Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996); *Tender Loving Rage*, intro. by Harry Harrison (Houston, TX: Tafford Publishing, 1991).

is implied by Carolyn Wendell to be an attempt to escape working in television, which he disliked for many reasons, including what he perceived as the repression of originality.[3]

The decade offers particular insight into Bester's psychological extrapolations between sf and non-sf considering his only mainstream works were written during this period. Therefore, it enables a comparison of his works and approaches, both contemporary and futuristic. Having studied both the sciences and the humanities, including psychology, while attending the University of Pennsylvania, Bester's desire for sf to recognise the connections between science and the individual and the need for genuine, human characters in writing can perhaps be traced to this education.[4] Bester's essays and analysis of his own works will be used in order to discuss his approach to the usefulness of psychology and its position in aiding the prevention of the split self. The split self within Bester's work can be defined as a self at odds with its own functioning, either through conscious ignorance of the unconscious or due to a separation between the internal and external selves. A useful, contemporary description of the effects of the split self is given by T. W. Adorno and others in 1950:

> When the unresolved unconscious conflicts become intensified and come closer to consciousness, the ego, totally unprepared, feels overwhelmed and shocked. This may lead merely to strong anxieties […] In more extreme form, however, it may lead to depersonalization, withdrawal from reality, denial, projections, and other psychotic manifestations.[5]

Often resulting in the identity crises portrayed by Bester, the self is shown to struggle with reconciling its split halves. This struggle is frequently mirrored through sociological versions of the same conflict, creating a split society (e.g. between elites and non-elites) that suffers through its own reconciliation of the overall American identity.

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[3] Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), pp. 5, 9.
[4] Peter Nicholls, 'Bester, Alfred', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. by John Clute and others (22 Oct. 2014) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/bester_alfred> [accessed 3 November 2014].
[5] T. W. Adorno and others, *The Authoritarian Personality*, ed. by Max Horkheimer and Samuel H. Flowerman (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1950), p. 970.

By examining Bester's position within the wider literary context and his own examinations between genres, an understanding of literature's general response to Cold War psychology and the difference of approaches between genres should be subsequently developed. The use of non-realist methods allowed for deeper exploration of the mind through extrapolation in contrast with mainstream fiction which tends towards approaching social reflections of identity mimetically. With the freedom to explore psychology in non-mimetic fashion, Bester utilised sf's ability to liberate psychology from the contemporary by allowing extrapolations of the development of social psychology beyond the 1950s.

In the 1950s, the status of sf in relation to the Cold War was that of social commentary. Authors were under less political threat than mainstream writers and sf as popular genre meant readers could be exposed to discussions of psychology, McCarthyism, and nuclear weaponry. Judith Merril claimed that at 'the height of the McCarthy era […] science fiction became, for a time, virtually the only vehicle of political dissent'.[6] In addition, Mike Ashley asserts that sf magazines, and especially *Galaxy*, 'became the refuge for the anti-McCarthyites and the voice against repression'.[7] Thus, the contemporary position of sf and Bester's focus on the psychology of the individual allowed for examination of the Cold War state through its effect on society and the individual.

Much of the criticism currently available on 1950s' literature of the Cold War focuses, for the most part, on specific themes. Prevalent trends within literary criticism of the period do utilise psychology and identity but through particular approaches. Identity, for example, is mainly analysed through gender or race, with Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) being the text mostly examined.[8] When identity and psychology are utilised in conjunction, it is usually through the discussion of social conformity and the effect on the individual. (While this does partially coincide with Bester's approach to the subject, ideas specific to his work, such as the split self, are rarely, if ever, mentioned.) Though Rob Kroes' edited collection *The American Identity: Fusion and Fragmentation*, for example, does aim to demonstrate the split between the social and private self, it offers little in-depth

[6] Judith Merril, 'What do you mean: Science? Fiction?', in *SF: The Other Side of Realism: Essays on Modern Fantasy and Science Fiction*, ed. by Thomas D. Clareson (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971), pp. 53-95 (p. 74).
[7] Mike Ashley, 'Science Fiction Magazines: The Crucibles of Change', in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by David Seed (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 60-76 (p. 68).
[8] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, intro. by John F. Callahan (London: Penguin, 2001).

analysis of the psychology involved.[9] However, it does demonstrate the increase in critical recognition of the social impact of psychology, as emphasised in later works, such as by Adam Piette or Paul Boyer.[10]

The analysis of the impact of politics and the desire to belong are equally examined, though often in regards to conscious understanding of conformity rather than psychology, as evidenced by William H. Whyte, Jr.'s examination of the era.[11] Civil rights and morality are also main considerations of the decade but, as William Darby indicates, are normally critically analysed through their relationship to Communism or sexuality, respectively. It is worth noting that Darby's research, which can be considered expansive and inclusive, published in his work *Necessary American Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s*, does not contain any science fiction.[12] However, the focus on war and domestic particularities within the texts Darby does examine indicates that, despite genre, similar issues were being raised by authors across the literary fields.

The main approach to literature of the period, however, is through nuclear war/weapons/annihilation. Critical works such as *The Nightmare Considered: Critical Essays on Nuclear War Literature* and *The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction* demonstrate the overarching, genre-crossing importance of the subject.[13] The collective awareness of the nuclear situation allowed for an abundance of research into the treatment of nuclear weapons within literature of the 1950s, especially in regards to futurelessness, mass annihilation, and the general atmosphere of fear. More recent publications, such as *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, noticeably lack analysis of the Cold War, nuclear concerns, or psychology.[14] Though Bester, Freud, and the Cold War are all mentioned within the text, the references are brief and warrant no

[9] Rob Kroes, ed., *The American Identity: Fusion and Fragmentation* (Amsterdam: Amerika Instituut, 1980).
[10] Adam Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).
[11] William H. Whyte, Jr, *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959).
[12] William Darby, *Necessary American Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987).
[13] Nancy Anisfield, ed., *The Nightmare Considered: Critical Essays on Nuclear War Literature* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991); Martha A. Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988).
[14] Eric Carl Link and Gerry Canavan, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

individual chapters or extensive analysis. As the importance of nuclear weapons to the Cold War has been relatively thoroughly explored, this thesis aims to examine an alternate avenue of analysis.

Through Bester's utilisation of identity crises, the split self will be examined. Rather than concentrating on mass loss of life, the focus will be on individual loss of life through an absence of identity resulting from the sociological consequences of the Cold War. The dilemma between the known (conscious) and unknown (unconscious) self indicates a general inability to completely know oneself. Paranoia over the self and others, resulting for example from the fear of the unknown enemy or brainwashing, raises questions about presumptions of identity and the stability of the self. This often leads to Bester's use of identity crises to represent not only the importance of psychology and the contrast between internal and external, but to discuss the psychological impact of the Cold War itself and the effect of conformity on American culture and mentality.

Conformity is often found within Bester's work to nearly inevitably result in a split self and the often perpetual dissonance between the internal and external selves. Identity crises within Bester's work are frequently based on the concept that an individual may not be aware of their own internal/external conflict, thereby finding themselves ignorant of, or lacking control over, their own thoughts or actions. Hannah Arendt writes that 'we ourselves do not always, and never fully, know what we are doing'. She attributes this lack of knowledge to the 'dangers and perplexities' of the century.[15] As such, Arendt contrasts knowledge of the external with ignorance of the internal, demonstrating individual confusion as resulting from social complexity. Further, Allen Ginsberg refers to the Cold War's ability to impose 'a vast mental barrier on everybody, a vast antinatural psyche'. Consequently, individuals undergo a 'hardening', in which personal desires are subsumed by social whims and responsibilities.[16] Following on from these considerations, this thesis's main thrust will be to explore how Bester connects the psyche to Cold War society.

Given Bester's own focus on Freudian psychology, especially during the 1950s, this thesis will similarly limit its application of psychological discussions to

[15] Hannah Arendt, 'The Ex-Communists', in *Essays in Understanding: 1930-1954, Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1994), pp. 391-400 (p. 399).
[16] Thomas Clark, 'Allen Ginsberg', in *Writers at Work: The 'Paris Review' Interviews*, ed. by George Plimpton, intro. by Alfred Kazin, III (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), pp. 279-320 (p. 309).

those based in Freud's work. Therefore, the analysis of Bester's use of identity utilises a Freudian-based approach despite the potential appropriateness or relevance of other schools of thought. Further, due to Bester's wide-ranging use of Freud's works, as he does not focus on one particular concept or theory, this thesis similarly ranges across Freud's work in order to use what is necessary for analysis of Bester's own use of Freud. As such, this thesis is neither concerned with psychoanalysing Bester as an author nor using psychology to analyse his works; rather, it is specifically concerned with understanding instances of Freudian ideas and influences within Bester's writing as it connects to the Cold War. Though many terms and theories will be introduced and defined at the point in the thesis in which they are used for analysis, such as sublimation, which is initially discussed and defined on pages 75-76, certain general terms which are repeatedly approached are more usefully introduced and defined at the outset.

Considering the Freudian approach to the psyche, the concepts of the id, superego, and ego are consistently utilised to discuss the split self and the conscious/unconscious. Freud differentiates between the id and ego by explaining that 'everything that happens in the id is and remains unconscious', while all the processes that occur in the ego '*can* become conscious', though this is not a guarantee.[17] Anna Freud additionally defines this tripartite structure of the psyche by stating that the psychic personality of an individual is divided 'into an instinctual unconscious *id*, a rationally orientated *ego*, and an ethical-moral, critical agency, the *super-ego*, which develops on the basis of identifications'.[18] Bester's use of these terms fits the definitions given here and his approach to the split between what is conscious and what is unconscious underscores many of his portrayals of the split self. The specific separation of the psyche in Freudian psychology and the labelling of each as either instinct, rationale, or morality informs Bester's particular approach to the conflict between an individual's impulses and their self-understanding. As such, his characters are uniquely Freudian as a result of being specifically defined by this dualism.

[17] Sigmund Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, intro. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 7-65 (p. 19). Author's own emphasis.
[18] Anna Freud, 'Introduction', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 1-4 (p. 3). Author's own emphasis.

Further, Freud's theory of the life and death drives/instincts are often evoked in Bester's work through his repetition of themes centred around rebirth, renewal, and the desire to return to the comforts of the womb or childhood. The life instinct, or Eros, is defined by Freud as the 'preserver of life' and the source of the 'self-preservative instincts'. Thus, it is inherently contrasted with the death drive. Freud defines the death drive as instincts that 'rush[] forward so as to reach the final aim of life as swiftly as possible' and that there is an inherent urge to 'restore an earlier state of things' which had been abandoned due to external pressures. Additionally, Freud refers to the fear of death as an anxiety specifically developed as a result of separation from the mother, hence the relationship Bester repeatedly examines between death and a return to the womb or childhood.[19]

The simultaneous desire for, and fear of, death is explained by Herbert Marcuse as resulting from the death instinct's unconscious motivation to relieve tension and escape pain. Marcuse expands on Freud's theory of the death and life instincts by stating that the conflict created by the id's destructive impulses and the ego's commitment to Eros results in a '"splitting" [of] the unity of the personality as a whole', resulting in 'inner-directed destructiveness'. [20] Likewise, Norman O. Brown presents the discussion that if death affords individuality, yet mankind fears and represses death, mankind consequently fears and represses its own individuality.[21] Therefore, the tripartite aspects of the psyche, the death and life instincts, and the concept of the split self are uniquely intertwined with one another allowing for a particular approach which is uniquely Freudian. Bester's use of these concepts either separately or in conjunction with one another therefore only further demonstrates his unwavering focus on Freudian psychology and the benefits this approach has afforded his writing.

Additionally, it is worth considering Freud's assertion that the 'human instinct of aggression and self-destruction' have brought the power of mankind to 'such a pitch that by using them they could now very easily exterminate one another'. Freud further claims that, as a result, Eros must rise equally in strength in

[19] Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis,* pp. 218-68 (pp. 259, 258, 248, 244). Author's emphasis removed; Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 439-78 (p. 478).
[20] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 29, 53.
[21] Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), p. 105.

order to not be overwhelmed by this increase in the death drive.[22] Brown's assumption that 'The death instinct is the core of the human neurosis' allows a connection to be made between the ability to annihilate mankind and human neurosis, via the death drive.[23] This interconnectivity of wide-scale destruction and neurotic behaviour lends credence to the concept of the Cold War as collective neurosis, which will be further discussed later on.

The terms and theories introduced and briefly discussed here should lay the groundwork for orientating subsequent discussions of Bester's use of Freudian psychology. It should also aim to provide an overview of how these concepts interact and lend themselves to Bester's particular approach towards the self and the psyche within his works. In defining these terms, it should be seen how Bester's approach to psychology is uniquely Freudian. More than just his singular use of Freud, the concepts and themes Bester discusses require a Freudian base in order to portray his particular approach to characterisation and his examination of the potential for psychological conflict and self-reconciliation.

While the prevailing approaches to critical analysis of 1950s' literature is understandable, as many works written in the decade focused on areas such as nuclear war, gender, race, domesticity, or family, the psychological impact of nuclear weapons and the era as a whole was not entirely disregarded. With the rise of Freudianism, the consideration of the internal American gained importance, especially between the 1930s and 1955 with the rise of the American Psychoanalytic Association.[24] Randall Bennett Woods claims that 'The psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud had already dramatically shaped and misshaped the way Americans thought about the sources of human conduct and the disorders of the mind.'[25] Desires for fiction to mimetically reflect American society meant that these conceptions, whether accurate or not, were utilised in creating the American hero. Bester's move abroad in 1954 enabled him to write while distanced from this atmosphere giving him an expatriate view of the American self in his later works of the 1950s.[26] Freud's popularity corresponded with the move 'towards neurosis and

[22] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, 1939), p. 144.
[23] Brown, p. 284.
[24] Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 67.
[25] Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 146.
[26] Wendell, p. 6.

personalism' that resulted from the rising dominance of 'psychologism and libertarian individualism'.[27] With Bester's first full length novel published in 1952 and his interest in Freud coinciding with Freud's growing popularity, the connections between Bester's writing and his contemporary society can be drawn. With the 1950s suffering the full force of the advent of the Cold War and its associated proxy wars, both domestic and international, Bester's writing of the 1950s offers a view into the literary situation of the decade, which presented an outlet for this approach to individualism.

The 'Freudian Fifties' thus stimulated a 'therapeutic inward turn' that contrasted with the social conformity politically encouraged throughout the decade.[28] However, though therapy was promoted for health reasons, it simultaneously served the purpose of instilling psychological norms. Therapy or medication could thus be used in order to create a balanced, average mentality. As Robert J. Corber comments, 'The increasing reliance of postwar Americans on psychiatry' legitimated psychiatric knowledge as 'law', allowing not only the possibility of increased self-understanding but the ability for psychologists to 'not only enforce the law but also to define it'.[29]

Robert Lowell's reference to the 'tranquilized Fifties' reflects Eric Burns' discussion of the progression of self-medication within America. Though it was nearly impossible at the start of the decade to purchase tranquilizers, Burns states that by the 1960s, 'Americans were swallowing more than a million pounds of […] pills a year.'[30] Bester's assumption that sf is designed to excite a calm reality indicates that even he was not exempt from ideas of mental adjustment but the narratives of both he and his contemporaries are more complex than this general statement suggests.[31] As this thesis will show, Bester examined the psychology of individuals split between their public and private selves by utilising this ability of external influences to alter mentality.

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[27] Piette, p. 61.
[28] Piette, p. 8.
[29] Robert J. Corber, *In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 189.
[30] Robert Lowell, 'Memories of West Street and Lepke', in *Life Studies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), pp. 99-100 (p. 99, line 12). Author's emphasis removed. Eric Burns, *Invasion of the Mind Snatchers: Television's Conquest of America in the Fifties* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010), p. 57.
[31] Alfred Bester, 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man', *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 408-30 (p. 417-18). This will be fully discussed in chapter 5.

Bester's specifically Freudian approach to this examination corresponds not only with Freud's growing popularity but with the fact that Freudian psychology enabled connections to be made between psychology, ideology, consumerism, and the mass media which were particularly salient in the 1950s. Therefore, despite the delay between the initial introduction of Freudian psychology and its use as examined here, the rise of its relevance in the 1950s and Bester's specific interest in it reflects the particular time period which this thesis focuses on. *The Authoritarian Personality*, written by Adorno and others, explains that 'psychoanalysts have claimed that the attitude toward money reveals early instinctual fixations and anxieties', indicating that consumerism relies on psychological compulsions over which the individual may not have control.[32] The rise of consumerism in the 1950s means a rise in outlets for these anxieties, therefore giving them social representation in a way which was perhaps previously unavailable. Corber considers that the desire for status in relation to consumerism, which will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, 'could supposedly become pathological'.[33] Herbert Marcuse considers 'mass production and mass distribution [to] claim the *entire* individual'. Additionally, Marcuse believes that the entertainment industry is responsible for indoctrinating and manipulating the public by promoting 'a false consciousness' which 'becomes a way of life.[34] In connection with the statements by Adorno and Corber, the psychological connection between consumerism, conformity, and individual neuroses and anxieties becomes clear.

As well, connections between ideology and psychology are of particular significance during the 1950s, which, similar to consumerism, is utilised by Bester to examine the self within society. For example, Erich Fromm, writing in 1956, states that 'The average man today obtains his sense of identity from his belonging to a nation', thus linking personal identity with a sense of patriotism.[35] Wilhelm Reich believes psychoanalysis is needed in order to understand ideology and the individual's position within the social structure as a result of their identification with a nation.[36] In relation to this, Corber considers psychoanalysis to be 'one of the

[32] Adorno and others, p. 308.
[33] Corber, p. 95.
[34] Herman Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 10, 12. Author's own emphasis.
[35] Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 58.
[36] Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, ed. by Mary Higgins and Chester M. Raphael (London: Souvenir Press (E&A), 1972), pp. 28, 47. The connection between Wilhelm Reich and Ben

major ideological tropes of the postwar period'. Thus, ideology and psychology become irrevocably linked and an important feature of individual identity. Psychological ideology is linked back to consumerism as well through Corber's assertion that television was responsible for psychologically motivating political behaviour.[37] By tying each of these aspects together and linking them to concepts so prevalent in the 1950s, the importance of Freudian psychology/psychoanalysis to the discussion of these topics is illuminated and Bester's interest in and use of them throughout his works becomes particularly tied to the decade which this thesis examines.

As seen, Freudian theories uniquely resonated with the Cold War era and Bester's exploration of the self in society in a way other schools of psychology did not, as previously mentioned. For example, though Jungian psychology could be useful at various points of analysis, it is avoided. This is partly because of Bester's exclusively Freudian focus and partly because Freud offers avenues of approach linked to Bester's writing which Jung does not provide. Brown comments that the 'fundamental orientation of Jung' is to flee from 'the problem of the body' and 'concept of repression' in favour of sublimation. Use of this approach would be in direct contrast with much of Bester's discussion of these same concepts. Rather than escaping these issues, Bester aims to present precisely why they should be recognised and solved. As Brown puts it, 'Freudianism must face the issue'; a similar sentiment to how Bester designs his characters. Brown further comments that psychoanalysts who came after Freud, including Jung, did not accept Freud's concept of the 'life-and-death duality', thus rejecting Freud's assumption of the inherent conflict within the individual and the potential for neuroses resulting from this tension.[38] With much of Bester's work utilising neuroses or compulsions based on womb imagery or attempts at escape, often through a return to childlike conditions, the rejection of Freud's duality between the life and death instincts would also be a rejection of these themes, rendering much of Bester's approach invalid. Thus, the Freudian approach is required over other psychoanalysts in order to build the narratives Bester aims to tell.

Reich can be seen most clearly in Wilhelm Reich's assertion that the individual as automaton causes the individual to resort to 'mechanistic thinking' and 'mechanical killing', which can be seen in Reich's predetermined response to D'Courtney's message and his decision to use the atavistic weapon of a gun. This will be discussed in further detail in chapter 1. Reich, p. 342.

[37] Corber, pp. 10, 97.

[38] Brown, pp. 313, 81.

Additionally, in terms of other forms of psychology, Brown comments that Freud's discovery of psychological meaning in all acts that a person commits excludes behaviourism as a valid approach to psychological understanding. Brown writes that explaining psychological phenomena using 'behavioristic principles' would give them 'a cause but no meaning'.[39] As a result, self-understanding and self-reconciliation would become difficult approaches to advocate as there would be no meaning beyond a generic cause-and-effect basis, rendering understanding the psychological self irrelevant, which Bester would clearly disagree with, as will be shown. As well, behavioural psychology is indicated by David Riesman to not be enough to induce conformity, implying that the mere action without any meaning is not enough for uniformity. Therefore, non-behaviourist psychology would be needed for conformity and, presumably, to avoid it as well.[40] Thus, a discussion of the connection between psychology and conformity is implied to require a form of psychoanalysis.

Other psychological premises of the 1950s include Dianetics, which will be discussed in relation to Bester's writing in chapter 1. Though specifically originating from the sf genre through L. Ron Hubbard, it eventually developed a larger following, becoming Scientology. A form of psychotherapy, Dianetics offered a cure for 'uncover[ing] the Superman latent in us all'.[41] The protagonist of *The Stars My Destination,* Gully Foyle, offers a similar concept by revealing his latent potential and encouraging the same in others. Unlike Dianetics, however, Bester's depiction of prompting latent potential does not promise to be easy but rather requires self-understanding and conscious recognition of what the self is and is not capable of. Thus, Bester follows a similar vein to Dianetics but remains Freudian in his approach.

Despite what Bester's work has to offer in terms of the literary approach to psychology, his impact and significance in the area is under examined and often critically ignored. Carolyn Wendell's biography and summary/analysis of his works remains the only study of its kind in English and is more of a short handbook than anything substantial. Comprised of only forty pages of actual analysis meant to cover

[39] Brown, p. 3.
[40] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 129.
[41] Peter Nicholls, 'Dianetics', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. by John Clute and others (28 Oct. 2015) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/dianetics> [accessed 1 June 2016].

Bester's entire career, it hardly narrows the gap of critical examination on his writings.[42] Existing criticism on Bester is likely to only mention him in passing while simultaneously recognising his work as important or influential. Darren Harris-Fain, for example, mentions Bester's significance in foreshadowing 'later importations of modernist and postmodernist concerns and techniques into SF' but neither elaborates analytically nor mentions him again. *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction* only mentions Bester three times and each time in relation to *The Stars My Destination* (1956) with one mention of *The Demolished Man* (1952), demonstrating not only the lack of critical analysis of him as an author, but the repetitive approach to his works.[43]

Though Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin claim Bester nearly 'started an American New Wave all by himself', they again only mention *The Stars My Destination* in regards to his work of the decade.[44] Adam Roberts offers a more extensive look at Bester's work and offers analysis lacking elsewhere but again limits his examinations to *The Stars My Destination*.[45] Though Bester's use of psychology is occasionally examined, his works are more often applauded for their typographical inventiveness or contribution of technique to sf. Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz acknowledges Bester's use of psychology and the split self in regards to 'Fondly Fahrenheit' (1954) but does so only briefly before discussing these concepts in terms of Bester's sentence structure and use of the sf trope of man versus machine.[46] In terms of his later works, Brian McHale does acknowledge Bester's novels of the 1970s and 1980s but only refers to them as 'linguistically playful',

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[42] A recent German publication by Hans Frey appears to be of a similar nature to Wendell's work; it includes a bibliography and textual overview with brief criticism. At only 135 pages, it is not much more substantial than Wendell's work. It is currently not readily available nor translated into English and thus not fully examined here. See Hans Frey, *Alfred Bester: Tycoon der Science Fiction* (Berlin: Shayol, 2011).

[43] Darren Harris-Fain, 'Dangerous Visions: New Wave and Post-New Wave Science Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, pp. 31-43 (p. 32); Matthew J. Costello, 'U.S. Superpower and Superpowered Americans in Science Fiction and Comic Books', in *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, pp. 125-38 (p. 126); Priscilla Wald, 'Science, Technology, and the Environment', in *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, pp. 179-93 (p. 182).

[44] Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[45] Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[46] Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, *Science Fiction and Postmodern Fiction: A Genre Study* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 142-143; Alfred Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit' in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 91-111.

which would seem to ignore the linguistic nuances of Bester's earlier works.[47] In addition, Richard Kadrey and Larry McCaffery briefly relate aspects of *The Stars My Destination* which they believe indicate it as a precursor to cyberpunk but, though acknowledged, the novel is approached in a particular manner that this thesis will not be utilising.[48]

While the critical explorations mentioned here are by no means exhaustive regarding available analysis of Bester's works, they serve to demonstrate the most common approaches and the lack of extensive, in-depth analysis on his use of psychology and the split self. Andrew M. Butler's essay on psychoanalysis in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, for example, despite heavily examining the use of Freud in sf, fails to mention Bester at all.[49] In addition, much of the analysis mentioned here revolves around the same novels, creating a singular approach akin to the attention paid to nuclear fictions.

In order to expand the boundaries of critical approaches to Bester, this thesis will utilise Bester's fiction and non-fiction, both within the sf genre and outside it, to show how Bester explores psychology through his characters' struggles with identity crises and the split self. Bester will be shown to advocate for the need to reconcile personal and social identity in order to prevent a loss of self, conformity, or social isolation. It will additionally be shown that this reconciliation is needed in order to foster personal understanding of psychology which Bester's works suggest is needed in order to overcome barriers of the 'other'.

Furthermore, this thesis contends that Bester's approach to psychology develops and foreshadows the growing awareness in the general public that the individual may not be in control of their own mind. William Darby considers this realisation to be 'an accurate portrait of twentieth-century man'.[50] Thus, Bester can be shown to mirror the contemporary individual's situation even if they themselves are not aware of it. Bester's writing will be shown to utilise the Cold War atmosphere to underscore a social tension between the self in society and the self of

[47] Brian McHale, 'POSTcyberMODERNpunkISM', in *Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Science Fiction*, ed. by Larry McCaffery (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 308-23 (p. 314).
[48] Richard Kadrey and Larry McCaffery, 'Cyberpunk 101: A Schematic Guide to *Storming the Reality Studio*', in *Storming the Reality Studio*, pp. 17-29 (p. 18).
[49] Andrew M. Butler, 'Psychoanalysis', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 288-97.
[50] Darby, p. 285.

society, examining the differences between the 'presented' self and the 'real' self. This thesis argues that the Cold War was a form of collective neurosis and that Bester's utilisation of crises of identity representationally mirrors mass Cold War psychology against individual psychology. By mirroring personal and social psychology this way, Bester will be shown to demonstrate the relationship between social pressures and anxieties and the aspects of human psychology which produce and reinforce these concepts. By exploring the reflective nature of psychology in this way, Bester indicates that individual psychology is inevitably influenced by social psychology due to the self's existence within society. Thus, as a result, the Cold War is shown to have an irrevocable impact on the individual.

A model of the Cold War as collective neurosis is particularly relevant in relation to Bester's exclusive use of Freudian psychology considering Freud's own considerations on the concept. The assumption that an entire society can be sick is stated by Freud in his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). The reflective nature of the social and the personal is expressed by Freud in his questioning of whether the diagnosis of 'neurotic' could be applied to both individuals and the whole of humanity. In discussing the 'diagnosis of collective neuroses', Freud expects that the 'pathology of civilized communities' would become an appropriate arena in which to utilise therapeutic applications of psychology.[51] Norman O. Brown further discusses the connections Freud makes between individual guilt and 'the social neurosis of mankind'. In doing so, Brown explains that there is a connection between guilt and external aggression, indicating that war is the therapeutic attempt to relieve this guilt. As such, war itself is a social neurosis resulting from a release of aggression.[52] Thus, the Cold War can be seen as the literal embodiment of social neurosis caused by externalised aggression resulting from guilt over World War II, which will be discussed more in-depth in subsequent chapters.

By utilising psychology to examine the feedback between the social and the personal, Bester is able to explore the complex pressures which the Cold War exerts on individual mentality. Through this, Bester will be shown to connect the political with the personal through the psyche by indicating that individual loss of life due to an absence of identity is a direct result of social consequences of the Cold War. The model of Cold War as collective neurosis allows for an examination of this feedback

[51] Freud, *Civilization*, pp. 141, 142.
[52] Brown, p. 153.

through the differences between social and individual perceptions of, and reactions to, concepts such as nuclear annihilation, conformity, and fear of the 'other'. Evidence provided through the works of Paul Boyer and Arthur Koestler are additional sources for this model. Connections between the Cold War and psychology indicated through these considerations enables a reading of Bester's concept of the split self as an individual response to the divided nature of the American nation as a whole.[53] Boyer expands the argument that the collective 'blotting out [of] the nuclear reality' was such a profound delusion 'that if it appeared in a single individual it would demand psychiatric treatment'.[54] As the psychological health of the nation may not always represent that of the individual, the dissonance further indicates the split between society and the individual, not only in beliefs or mentality, but in the perception of disorders. Therefore, a society which collectively suffers a delusion can still perceive an individual as the 'other' if they suffer a delusion not shared by the majority. As such, the split between social and personal can be used to represent the split within the individual itself, as an analogy between superego (individual) and id (society), which allows for a representational comparison between split society and the split self of the individual.

In addition, taking nuclear war for granted is utilised by Bester to examine the psychological numbing required in order to maintain the self under threat of annihilation.[55] By examining Bester's exploration of psychological numbing, this thesis aims to further answer considerations of the psychological dissonance required to maintain this level of numbing and the subsequent effect on one's identity. Boyer furthers these considerations by explaining that 'the unrelieved tension and fear' produced by a universal danger such as nuclear war would eventually 'produce the political equivalent of a psychotic episode'.[56] This psychosis can be seen in regards to the excessive political importance placed on informing (e.g. McCarthyism), Capitalism, and consumerism. The connections to patriotism create a fervent desire in the public to ensure themselves and others that they are not only participating in the American Dream, but by doing so, are aiding in the prevention of Communism, thereby conflating the public and private self.[57] These explorations are then used in

[53] Adam Piette's discussion of this national split will be further examined in chapter 2.
[54] Boyer, p. 282.
[55] This textual approach is more thoroughly considered in chapter 2 regarding 'Hobson's Choice'.
[56] Boyer, p. 286.
[57] The American Dream is further discussed in chapter 2 regarding 'Disappearing Act'.

Bester's work to indicate the collective delusion of normality and social acceptance by indicating how ideas of normality are obtained. The psychological urge to belong through consumption and conformity is, according to Arthur Koestler, not the result of individual lunacy but rather based on an 'emotion-based belief system' that encourages collective delusions through common thought.[58] Therefore, the emotional interiority of the individual is used to create conformity by sublimating fear and tension into social harmony through material consumption.

Examining the impact of the Cold War on identity through individual psychology is not distinctly unique to Bester's writing but his conceptualisation of this identity crisis as a splitting of the self offers an avenue of exploration which currently lacks critical examination. Bester's approach to identity has a basis in contemporary society and literature but extrapolates connections between the self and society that unites various aspects of both mainstream and science fiction writing. 'At the heart of the successful character portraits of the period is the act of self-creation […] so prickly with possibilities that a reader might feel he/she is witnessing the process of molding the new American self.'[59] In addition, the 'threat of nuclear holocaust or other dire consequences of the Cold War was a dominant factor in the science fiction imagination from the end of the 1940s to the beginning of the 1990s.'[60] Bester's combination of the science fiction imagination with the moulding of the new American self allows him to foreshadow psychological aspects then separated by genre and demonstrate the intertwined nature of self-identity and consequences of the Cold War.

The dualistic nature of this literary approach enhances Bester's discussion of identity crises by allowing contemporary concerns, such as television, advertising or conformity, to be extrapolated through science fiction to envision futures in which these issues continue to shape American lives. Having worked in television, Bester is able to accurately portray his experiences, perhaps explaining why his two non-sf works focus on this industry. Conversely, his sf envisions long-term effects such as the corporate 'clans' seen in *The Stars My Destination*.[61] Those works which are mainstream, and most in line with contemporary society, aim to push psychological

[58] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), pp. 265, 266.
[59] Walter Shear, *The Feeling of Being: Sensibility in Postwar American Fiction* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 67.
[60] M. Keith Booker, 'Science Fiction and the Cold War', in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, pp. 171-84 (p. 171).
[61] Wendell, p. 10.

awareness through its characters in the guise of identity crises perpetrated specifically through these mainstream concerns. Alongside this, Bester's science fiction aims to examine these same concerns in terms of potential outcomes if psychology is not properly understood or Cold War conformity is propelled towards its possible ends. Brian M. Stableford and David Langford write that 'A great deal of fiction which attempts to explore the mysteries of mind lies on the borderline between sf and Mainstream fiction'.[62] Bester's varying use of both genres could thus partially result from utilising each genre to form different approaches and partially because his strong focus on psychology encourages an overlapping of the mainstream and sf.

In exploring Bester's use of genre, the dividing line between genres and their representation of contemporary society will be peripherally examined within this thesis, as will the place of psychology within science fiction. Bester's works as a whole prefigure and further Lionel Trilling's conclusions in 1955 concerning Freudianism and culture. Trilling believed that Freud presented the self as both submitting to, and in opposition with, culture, by being both separate from, and yet partially created by, society. Claiming Freud to be 'at one with literature', Trilling concluded that literature is inherently concerned with the self and its 'standing quarrel with culture' is expressed in all great literature.[63] Martin Halliwell considers it nearly impossible in the 1950s 'not to draw on psychoanalytic concepts to explore identity'.[64] Thus, Bester can be assumed to be utilising psychology in a similar manner to his contemporaries, regardless of the approach employed to do so.

For example, Theodore Sturgeon utilises psychic reintegration in his novel *More Than Human* (1953) (which could be coupled with the ending of *The Demolished Man* or Espers), while Ray Bradbury focuses on child psychology in 'The World the Children Made' (1950) (which could be coupled with Bester's discussions on childhood and escape fantasies). As well, Philip José Farmer utilises the Oedipus complex in some of his works while explorations of psychological

[62] Brian M. Stableford and David Langford, 'Psychology', *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. by John Clute and others (8 Mar. 2016) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/psychology> [accessed 1 June 2016].
[63] Lionel Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture*, ed. by Sol Stein (Boston: Beacon, 1955), p. 58.
[64] Halliwell, p. 67.

identity can be seen in the writing of Algis Budrys.[65] All works indicated here are of the 1950s and all demonstrate the popularity of psychology in sf. Thus, this thesis does not aim to portray Bester's use of psychology itself as original but rather his approach, as it is clear that psychological considerations were important features across the genre.

However, various critical discussions of psychology claim, or seem to imply, that science fiction lacks the ability to create realistic characters with convincing internal selves. Bester discusses this lack of interiority within his own essays and his approach to psychology indicates an attempt to rectify what he perceives as one of the main downfalls of science fiction.[66] Puschmann-Nalenz, for example, writes that 'A lasting withdrawal is uncommon for an SF-character, the "Hamlet" in SF very rare'. Gulliver Foyle can be seen to contrast this statement and Bester's repeated examination of the results of social withdrawal on the psyche indicate that at the very least he was examining the potential effects of withdrawal, if not portraying them in the way Puschmann-Nalenz would expect. Puschmann-Nalenz further states that 'SF instead of an introverted character not sure of his own identity prefers the active and resolute protagonist'.[67] Again, Foyle arguably fits both sides of this description and presents an alternate approach to the portrayal of the sf identity.

Leonard Jackson likewise considers that 'only in certain art forms – late Shakespearean plays, serious novels, etc. – are characters designed to have a complex internal psychological structure. Quite often, characters have a purely representative function, and no interiority at all'.[68] Jackson's assertion, that only certain literary forms can allow for psychological understanding, will be shown to be the precise attitude that Bester often argues against throughout his works and which this thesis aims to examine. Bester's foreshadowing of the growing awareness that psychology is applicable across all areas and aspects of society through the universality of compulsions indicates that any individual, regardless of genre, fictitious or real, may not be in control of their own mind. Bester's presentation of

[65] Stableford and Langford, 'Psychology', [accessed 1 June 2016]; Theodore Sturgeon, *More Than Human* (London: Millenium, 2000); Ray Bradbury, 'The World the Children Made', *The Saturday Evening Post*, 23 September 1950, pp. 26-27, 62-63, 65-66, 68.
[66] This can be seen throughout Bester's letters, editorials, and non-fiction, but will be significantly discussed in chapter 5.
[67] Puschmann-Nalenz, p. 96.
[68] Leonard Jackson, *Literature, Psychoanalysis and the New Sciences of the Mind* (Harlow: Longman, 2000) p. 73.

Freudianism as valid indicates that characters such as Foyle, who undergo a series of psychological changes that coincide with his place in society, are modelled on expectations of how modern man would undergo the realisation of his own self.

Bester's attention to the psychology of individuals and the relation between the self and society likely reflects his purported desire to insert genuine characters into his writing. An analysis of the psychological and social differences of individuals was published by T. W. Adorno and others in 1950 and reflects the duality between individuals with a sense of self and psychological awareness and those who are conformed and disregard the importance of the psyche. For example, those individuals who 'take pleasure in obedience and subordination' also deny their own impulses and see 'everything unacceptable as outside the self'. In contrast, those who 'were much more familiar with themselves, more aware and accepting of emotional experiences and problems' were also those who were more likely to 'rebel against […] many of the cultural mores'.[69] This connection between conformity and psychological health is reflected in much of Bester's writings as subsequent analysis will demonstrate. Though there is no way to know whether Bester read this study, his approach to individuals ties in extremely well with the results published by Adorno, indicating that either Bester was aware of current sociological analysis or his approach to characterisation was particularly insightful.

However, despite the desire to write realistic, faithful characterisation, Bester's writing is still reflective of his time period considering race, gender, and sexuality. The focus within this thesis remains on psychological identity but other forms of identity and Bester's use or dismissal of them would allow for subsequent analysis; however, it will not be examined here. Psychological identity as the sole identity examined stems mainly from Bester's strong Freudian character base as well as the fact that an examination of other forms of identity would no longer allow an analysis of the Cold War as collective neurosis and thus, move this thesis into an area with which it is not engaging.

The reason for the overarching interest in psychological identity within Bester's works could be accounted for by contemporary considerations that other forms of identity are less universal or fall under the remit of psychological identity anyway. The exclusion of gender discussions could be accounted for by the era in

[69] Adorno and others, pp. 759, 943, 964, 968.

which Bester was writing as well as the inherently patriarchal stance of Freudianism, thus making Bester's use of psychology naturally exclusive of discussions of gender.[70] Furthermore, Corber writes that national security in 1950s' America relied on conformed concepts of gendered identity which led to politicised fears of differences and a 'generalized crisis of identities'. The concern therefore became the political crisis of these identities rather than identity crises themselves, making the psychological aspect override gender itself. Corber asserts that the postwar period in America saw 'the nation's political stability and economic prosperity' dependent 'upon the production of subjects who had internalized the rules and regulations governing Oedipal desire'.[71] As a result, it was more important politically to share rules of the psyche, specifically the Freudian concept of the psyche, again showing psychology to override other classes of identity even when politicised. Bester's focus on the Freudian psychological identity over all others may thus be a consequence of this political and sociological atmosphere.

Further, the absence of discussions of racial identity in Bester's work may similarly result from his assertion that psychological identity is common to all regardless of race or gender. However, Corber also discusses Cold War liberals and their beliefs that America as the 'melting pot' makes discussions of race or ethnicity irrelevant, though Corber acknowledges the opposing opinion regarding the importance of understanding differences between social identity and personal identity.[72] Bester does examine these differences but reflects them purely in psychological aspects, which this thesis follows as it serves to only analyse Bester's main focus on identity: psychological identity.

Bester's approach to sexual identity is the most clearly in line with his time period and affords little ambiguity, unlike discussions of race or gender. It can be fairly assumed that Bester, at least in some manner, accepted views of the time regarding homosexuality and lesbianism as developmental disorders which 'could not be considered categories of identity similar to other categories of identity, such as race or gender'.[73] Thus, Bester's exclusion of homosexuality as a form of identity within his work would seem to have a relatively clear sociological reason. References to homosexuality as an 'aberrant psychological condition' led to

[70] Fromm, p. 43.
[71] Corber, pp. 7, 199.
[72] Corber, p. 223.
[73] Corber, p. 8.

conclusions that homosexuals were 'sick' according to the medical model of same-sex eroticism, popular in the 1950s. This resonates noticeably with Bester's *Who He?* (1953), in which a character refers to a transvestite, presumed homosexual, as 'sick'.[74] If sexual identity is presumed a psychological disorder, it would fall under the remit of psychology anyway, making Bester's focus on psychological identity subsequently contain this discussion, though he does not directly examine homosexuality.

Bester's adherence to particular concepts of identity briefly discussed here is indicative of the period in which he was writing and Riesman asserts that:

> [W]e are forced to accept certain cultural definitions of class, sex, race, and occupational or social role. And the definitions are forced on us by the ways of the culture and by the socialization process we undergo, whether they happen to be timely or anachronistic, useful for or destructive of our character reserves and of our fundamental humanity.[75]

Similar to the conformity which Bester examines in his own work then, these definitions of identity are socially enforced and internalised, even to the point where the individual may no longer realise, therefore reinforcing the tension between individual and society.

Bester's works can consequently be used to explore the development of psychology through social reactions to texts and their critical reception, which can be examined in both mainstream and science fiction expectations of literature. The split between expectations of readers and desires of the author further defines the split self of society that Bester aims to reflect through his characters. The critically perceived separation of subject matter between mainstream and science fiction additionally enhances this split. The use of the psychological mode despite trappings of the literary adventure model, such as in *The Stars My Destination,* can be seen as an example of the attempt to balance what the audience wants to read with what Bester wants to portray.

[74] Corber, p. 67; Bester, *Who He?,* p. 179. This will be further discussed in chapter 2.
[75] Riesman, p. 308.

Due to the evolving nature of influences on these splits (e.g. proxy wars, prevalence of television, political changes), this thesis discusses Bester's works chronologically from 1950 to 1960 and historically contextual information is utilised within the particular chapter in which it is relevant. Further, the scope of this thesis is limited to Bester's output of printed word material in order to both focus on an amount of material reasonable for a thesis and due to much of his other works (e.g. television, radio, comics) being inaccessible. By only focusing on Bester's work within this decade, analysis is able to take advantage of the unique framing of this particular period of the Cold War era. Set against World War II and the dropping of atomic bombs on one side and the rise of race issues and civil rights on the other, the specific psychological viewpoint of the 1950s informs Bester's writing in a way which his work of other decades is lacking. Even Bester's own work of the 1950s becomes less psychologically explicit by the end of the decade, as Freudianism and psychology in general becomes more socially acceptable and internalised. With less to so strongly argue for, the end of the decade signifies the start of Bester's less psychologically driven works of the 1970s and 1980s.

This development of the impact and influence of psychology throughout the decade, and the ability to trace as such in Bester's works, is a further reason for a chronological discussion. In doing so, Bester's use of psychology can be considered alongside the development of other political or social aspects of the 1950s. Though Bester's approach will be shown to be more domestically situated than politically, the nature of examining the reflective relationship between the social and the personal requires considerations of the historical context which the model utilised within this thesis allows. By examining Bester's use of psychology within this context, the relationship between the private individual and public society will be shown to create personal identity specific to Cold War psychology.

Beginning with Bester's initial use of psychiatric sf, the thesis will then examine Bester's approach to ideas of the stranger. This will be followed by a discussion of psychological self-awareness. *The Stars My Destination* will then be framed under the idea of voluntary self-duality with the end of the decade focused on the mechanisation of mankind and the advertised self. Bester's own considerations of sf and the place of his works within it will be discussed in the sections dedicated to these non-fiction publications. Bester's non-fiction will also be used to demonstrate his literary foreshadowing of the social recognition of psychology by indicating how

his own attitudes to the subject aided in mirroring the cultural environment in which he was writing.

In examining Bester's use of the shifting relationship between psychology and society in terms of the Cold War, it will be demonstrated how Bester was questioning psychological norms more than may have been recognised. By performing this analysis, it will additionally be seen why Bester chooses to approach the subject in this way and its importance in understanding his literary contribution to the exploration of psychology within the decade. The vividness of personal and collective neuroses portrayed in Bester's work indicates that he is arguably approaching psychology differently than expected or anticipated by both readers (being psychologically unaware) and critics (having literary assumptions) thus giving particular significance to his approach as something worthy of extended analysis.

1. '[T]he unconscious takes over': The origins of Bester's use of psychiatric sf, 1950-1952

I.

Senator Joseph McCarthy's speech to the Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950, began a social and political paranoid culture of suspicion.[1] In 1953, Hannah Arendt wrote about the two categories created through informing: 'those who have the privilege to be the informers and those who are dominated by the fear of being informed upon'. This social separation emphasises Arendt's belief that 'we can fight a society of informers only by becoming informers ourselves'.[2] The irony of fighting the Cold War by becoming the very enemies the United States was meant to be against introduced the fear of the domestic enemy and emphasised the nature of conformity as a so-called defence measure.

However, the danger of fighting an ideology that could only be exposed by explicitly expressing it furthered the idea that anyone could be a Communist due to this lack of an external indicator. The development of paranoia and suspicion based on this inability to know the difference between friend and foe demonstrates the fact that 'It became imperative but more difficult to know if a neighbor was a real American or a duplicitous fake, a defense asset or a security risk. In the process, boundaries between "us" and "them" were both made and washed away'.[3] The placement of international concerns within the domestic limits of American society both politically and psychologically emphasises the sociological nature of anxiety. The domestic conflict with Communism therefore mirrors the international conflict against the USSR and its allies. This internal versus external divide is heavily

[1] Michael P. Rogin, 'McCarthyism and Mass Politics', in *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, ed. by Richard O. Curry and Thomas M. Brown (New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1972), pp. 219-38 (p. 226); Albert Fried, '[Introduction] Versions of the Wheeling Speech, Feb. 10 and 20, 1950', in *McCarthyism: The Great American Red Scare, A Documentary History*, ed. by Albert Fried (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 78.
[2] Hannah Arendt, 'The Ex-Communists', in *Essays in Understanding: 1930-1954, Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1994), pp. 391-400 (p. 394). For more on the idea of ex-Communists and informing, see Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (New York, NY: Random House, 1952).
[3] Catherine Lutz, 'Epistemology of the Bunker: The Brainwashed and Other New Subjects of Permanent War', in *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America*, ed. by Joel Pfister and Nancy Schnog (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 245-67 (p. 246).

utilised throughout Alfred Bester's work and is a key factor in the creation and understanding of the split personalities and identity crises suffered by his characters.

The focus on the unconscious self stems from Bester's own interest in psychology and the works of Sigmund Freud. Prior to the publication of his first 1950s' work, Bester writes that '[he] became hooked on psychiatry' and 'became a worshipper of Freud'.[4] Bester's first publication of the 1950s was 'Oddy and Id' (*Astounding Science Fiction,* August 1950).[5] The title alone is an indication of the Freudian influence; the id being the unconscious aspect of the mind.[6] In discussing the story with John W. Campbell, Jr., then editor of *Astounding,* Bester was assured that 'Freud is finished' and had 'been destroyed' by the discovery of Dianetics by L. Ron Hubbard. In agreeing to publish Bester's story, Campbell insisted on the 'removal of all Freudian terms', including the title, hence the original publication title of 'The Devil's Invention' (Bester, 'Oddy and Id: Introduction', p. 243).[7] This insistence on the erasure of Freud fails to anticipate the growing interest in psychology as other authors utilised the science in various means. For example, Robert Bloch's *Psycho* (1959) utilised psychology in discussing the private sphere and Mark Jancovich considers the novel to similarly explore a 'crisis of identity'.[8]

In addition, Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny* (1951) examines the self in war and William Darby considers the novel to 'render[] the personal doubts and organizational dismays of the wars' participants while emphasising the moral necessity for the struggle', which demonstrates a view that could be applied to the contemporary situation.[9] The non-uniform approach to the utilisation of psychology and the self within literature bolsters Martin Halliwell's belief that the 'silent generation', coming of age in the 1950s, soon after the start of the Cold War, 'was

[4] Alfred Bester, 'Oddy and Id: Introduction', in *Starlight: The Great Short Fiction of Alfred Bester* (Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday, 1976), pp. 242-44 (pp. 242, 243). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[5] Alfred Bester, 'Oddy and Id', in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 22-37. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[6] Sigmund Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, intro. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 7-65 (p. 19).
[7] Alfred Bester, 'My Affair with Science Fiction', in *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 443-76 (p. 461). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[8] Robert Bloch, *Psycho* (London: Corgi, 1977); Mark Jancovich, *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 251.
[9] Herman Wouk, *The Caine Mutiny* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958); William Darby, *Necessary American Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), p. 35.

reaching adulthood without the psychological and moral resources to speak out, let alone act against a system which encouraged acquiescence and conformity'.[10] The absence of resources could explain the public's lack of psychology's usage as well as authors' attempts to articulate it. The varying manners in which they do so reflect more their own approach to psychology than any social consensus. Thus, the general atmosphere of literary psychology in which Bester wrote both bolsters and deviates from his considerations of self and psychology.

Bester refers to 'Oddy and Id' as 'the first science fiction story [he] wrote after [his] conversion' to Freudian psychology ('Oddy and Id: Introduction', p. 243). He writes that 'the concept was Freudian, that a man is not governed by his conscious mind but rather by his unconscious compulsions' ('My Affair', p. 458). Considering this, 'Oddy and Id', aside from its literal position as the first sf work by Bester in the 1950s, could also be seen as the origin of Bester's literary exploration of Freudian concerns and the start of his narrative work concerning the unconscious self and compulsions. Bester explains that the concept for the story's narrative was created out of an argument with a friend regarding those who did wrong. Bester 'argued that people aren't always in conscious control of their actions; very often the unconscious takes over'. In asking his friend whether they have ever been driven by their unconscious, the friend replies 'Never' (Bester, 'Oddy and Id: Introduction', p. 244). What this exchange indicates is public ignorance regarding the importance of psychology and the dichotomy between conscious and unconscious.

The story follows Odysseus Gaul, known as Oddy, who is born with the power of luck. With the guidance of his mentors, Oddy attempts to consciously use his luck to prevent war. However, his unconscious self, the 'Id' of the title, instead works to bring it about through the unconscious desire to become 'Lord of the Universe'. Oddy's mentors slowly realise the controlling power of the Id (a realisation that perhaps mirrors Bester's hope for his readers), which exemplifies misunderstanding surrounding the unconscious. A misinformed ego would reduce the ability to balance the id, perhaps leading to the overwhelming power of the id in the first place.

One's identity is only capable of functioning as such if the individual recognises it as their identity. Otherwise, the identity is subsequently repressed,

[10] Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 64.

leading to many of the identity concerns discussed herein. This recognition of self is similar to Jean-Paul Sartre's consideration that in acquiring and reinforcing a sense of selfness, one is simultaneously denying all other selves and that 'this reinforcement is positively apprehended as the continuous choice of selfness'.[11] Therefore, maintaining an identity is a constant state of being managed by rejecting all other identities. If the identity is not reinforced, it has the potential to be replaced by another identity, thus subsuming the original self. Identity is therefore only static and singular when continuously exercised. This constant state of self-identification, according to Walter Shear, is a 'crucial awareness of the period' as he claims existence to be 'both existing and thinking about one's existence'.[12] As John Perry writes, 'Without knowledge of our own identity, everything we think and do would be senseless.'[13] Therefore, knowledge of identity and thoughts regarding existence are conscious examinations required in order to cement the self.

Bester's attention to naming his characters points to a simple yet significant way of cementing identity. Names are often found to either create a separate identity to that of the character's true self or impose an unnatural identity. Oddy's full name is Odysseus, which brings up obvious connotations with Homer's Odysseus (briefly mentioned in the text) and of someone destined for greatness. Unlike Odysseus, however, Oddy gains his greatness through luck rather than hard work, despite Odysseus's penchant for schemes which could be seen as paralleling Oddy.[14] Oddy's nickname, with connotations of 'odd', represents his power of luck and foreshadows his rise to power; an oddity since the story has revolved around preventing such a thing. Both his full name and nickname therefore equally represent the character but the dissonance between the two connotations creates an ambiguity between the varying personalities.

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[11] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), p. 307.
[12] Walter Shear, *The Feeling of Being: Sensibility in Postwar American Fiction* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 100
[13] John Perry, 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality', in *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. by John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer, 4th edn (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 368-88 (p. 374).
[14] Mansur G. Abdullah and others, 'Odysseus', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015) <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Odysseus> [accessed 9 June 2015].

Oddy's last name, 'Gaul', is presumably in reference to the ancient region of Western Europe and connotes power and empire.[15] However, it is also a homophone of 'gall'; a personality trait Oddy unconsciously exhibits through his rise to power.[16] Oddy's last name relates to his eventual position of power, but contrasts his approach to achieving it. With his forename and surname in constant flux between their different meanings, a crisis of nominal identity is created that represents Oddy's own crisis of self between his conscious ego and unconscious id. The use of 'and' in the title implies that it is Oddy which will ultimately end up working, albeit supposedly unintentionally, with his id, thereby indicating the rather immoral end of the story.[17] The id is contrasted with the super-ego, which is meant to be the source of 'ethical-moral' decisions and develops from the subject's own sense of identity.[18] With Oddy's identity in crisis, so then are his ethical-moral decisions. This separation points to an inner, unavoidable psychological split based on a conflict between overt and covert forces. Oddy, in the end, occupies both the position of protagonist and antagonist, similar to McCarthyism, as both began as attempts to rout out the enemy but ultimately created that which they aimed to prevent.

That an understanding of the mind could have prevented war in the story indicates that perhaps an understanding of the differences or similarities of the minds of the American public and Communist sympathisers would keep the Cold War cold. M. Keith Booker comments that there is a 'suggestion that the differences between the Americans and the Soviets […] are not so dramatic after all'.[19] This similarity is furthered through concepts such as mutually assured destruction and patriotic attachment to an ideology. As such, it is the insistence on the idea of the 'other' that significantly bolsters the assumption of differences between the two groups.

Present in the professors' fear of an impending war is Bester's concern over, and literary reflection of, the Cold War and the nascent Korean War. The war in the story is between 'two Independent Welfare States' and Bester estimates that the

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[15] Mansur G. Abdullah and others, 'Gaul', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (2015) <http://www.britannica.com/place/Gaul-ancient-region-Europe> [accessed 26 May 2015].
[16] 'gall, n.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015) <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/76230?rskey=BuyCE9&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 12 June 2015].
[17] This is further suggested by the initial line of the story: 'This is the story of a monster.' Bester, 'Oddy and Id', p. 22.
[18] Anna Freud, 'Introduction', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 1-4 (p. 3).
[19] M. Keith Booker, *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 34.

danger they pose is a result of the fact that 'From the best motives they were preparing to cut each other's throat', as a final war between them would 'mean[] ruin for both' ('Oddy and Id', p. 31). Jeremi Suri writes that the 'cold' aspect of the Cold War stemmed from the idea that 'Instead of appeasement or total war, a preponderance of power called for preventative action, designed to coerce good behavior from a dangerous adversary'.[20] Thus, Bester's fictional situation mirrors contemporary reality. Though thermonuclear weapons were still in the future, atomic bombs were available to both the Soviet Union and the US. Psychologically, the 'ethical-moral' aspect of the superego aligns it with 'best motives', while the 'primitive impulses' aligns the id with 'cut[ing] each other's throat'. Without the mediation of the ego and an ability to understand how the unconscious works, the dissonance within the self continues, leading to ambiguity over the outcome even among those taking part.

One of the scientists, Jesse Migg, points out that they were fooled by the masks Oddy wears to cover the 'primitive impulses of his subconscious mind', however unconsciously he portrays them (Bester, 'Oddy and Id', p. 36). That a self could be unaware of its own masks indicates how deeply self-deception can penetrate and how Oddy's identity crisis ultimately influences others. The last piece of dialogue in the story is Migg contending that 'There must be a God, if only because there must be an opposite to Oddy Gaul, who was most assuredly invented by the Devil' (Bester, 'Oddy and Id', p. 36). This connection between Oddy and the Devil lends some accuracy to the professors' initial assumption of Oddy as angel since the Devil as fallen angel parallels Oddy's position. The connection also demonstrates the original title of the story as 'The Devil's Invention'. The Devil, or Satan, having underlings capable of taking up residence in human bodies parallels Oddy's unconscious submission to his id as internal demon.[21] The sets of pairing within the story show not only the contrast between the conscious and unconscious selves but demonstrates the ambiguity of how one is alternately internally and externally perceived.

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[20] Jeremi Suri, 'The Early Cold War', in *A Companion to American Foreign Relations*, ed. by Robert D. Schulzinger (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 215-29 (p. 217).

[21] Mansur G. Abdullah and others, 'devil', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (2015) <http://www.britannica.com/topic/devil> [accessed 10 June 2015]; 'devil, n', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/51468?rskey=KuEAV1&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 10 June 2015]; W. R. F. Browning, 'devil', in *A Dictionary of the Bible* (2010) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199543984.001.0001>.

The ‘possibility of a dual cultural identity’ emphasises the self as split between the social and the personal, but also demonstrates Irving Howe’s consideration that ‘the interplay between external conditions and personal will’ is the ‘reality of social life’.[22] As such, the external cannot always mirror the internal. This identification and misidentification of others through perception or assumption mirrors that found within McCarthyism as, without an external indicator, one can never be sure of the inner-workings of another. This connection between the psychological and political both directly and indirectly led to the false accusations of members of the public being declared Communists and the overwhelming influence of the blacklist on the entertainment industry, which will be further discussed in a later chapter regarding *Who He?*.[23]

The implication that the use of masks or the dissonance between the conscious and unconscious self will always lead someone to an identity crisis is found throughout Bester’s work. Instances when it would seem contrasts between the external and internal self can be overcome often result in a fluid and unreliable self. The cause of this crisis, according to Rob Kroes, is the change from the ‘inner-directed’ personality of the nineteenth century to the ‘other-directed’ personality of the twentieth century, which ‘cannot but spell a loss of faith, a crisis of identity’.[24] The move from a focus on the self to a focus on the self in society lessens the consideration of the mental self as a key factor in producing identity and demonstrates a furthering reliance on social environment for a sense of self.

‘Oddy and Id’ sets out themes which continue throughout the rest of Bester’s work, such as naming, pairing of contrasts, external versus internal, and the need for a public understanding of psychology and the effect of the unconscious upon the conscious self. The influence of unconscious drives on an individual’s behaviour, as explored by Bester, are indicated to have a scientific, psychological background, and are influential enough to be taken seriously. As with Bester’s conversation with his friend, it is clear that many individuals did not accept psychiatric explanations for human behaviour. By using common fears of the early 1950s, Bester is able to utilise

[22] Shear, p. 89; Thomas Hill Schaub, *American Fiction in the Cold War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 38. Schaub is quoting Irving Howe, ‘Black Boys and Native Sons’, *Dissent*, Autumn 1963, pp. 353-68 (p. 115). The preceding reference is that provided by Schaub and appears to be incorrect. However, verification of the actual page number/s has been unsuccessful.
[23] Alfred Bester, *Who He?* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, [n.d.]).
[24] Rob Kroes, ‘Introduction – The American Identity, or How to “Elevate them guns a little lower”’, in *The American Identity*, ed. by Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: Amerika Instituut, 1980), pp. 9-15 (p. 14).

public interest to explore psychology and demonstrate its importance not only for personal mental health but in aiding social relations.

II.

In contrast, 'Of Time and Third Avenue' (*The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, October 1951) forgoes world-wide psychological implications and instead revolves around Oliver Wilson Knight and a 1990 almanac.[25] Intending to purchase the 1950 almanac, Knight inadvertently finds himself in possession of a book from the future. Confronted by a man calling himself Boyne, Knight's better nature is appealed to in an attempt to get him to relinquish the volume. The short story lightly plays with its contemporary social context in order to discuss the almanac and explore identity. When Boyne first arrives at the tavern, his difficulty with remembering contemporary words (such as using 'chronos' when he means 'hour') causes Macy, the barkeep, to declare, '"You're a foreigner [...] What's your name? I bet it's Russian"' (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 128). While the assumption that the stranger is Russian shows a preoccupation with the main opposition during the Cold War, it also indicates a general sense of paranoia regarding the 'other'. This need for names mirrors the 'dark naming in McCarthyite America'.[26] Jeremi Suri comments that 'Washington placed a premium on identifying friends and foes', a concept which is furthered in Sidney Hook's explanation that 'the inescapable consequence of their identification is either self-destruction […] or destruction at the hands of their enemies'.[27] A foreigner therefore causes immediate suspicion and the request for a name indicates a need for identification; not just through the literal sense but in the more abstract concept of names indicating friend or foe.

Boyne gives his name by saying '"Identify me as Boyne"', thereby directly answering Macy's implicit need for identification through the explicit request for a name (Bester, 'Of Time', pp. 137, 128). The phrasing of the reply could be taken as yet another misunderstanding of colloquialisms (he could have easily said 'my name is' or a similar phrase). However, it does underscore an understanding of how names

[25] Alfred Bester, 'Of Time and Third Avenue', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 127-35. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[26] Adam Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 68.
[27] Suri, p. 227; Albert Fried, ed., *McCarthyism: The Great American Red Scare*, p. 64. Fried is quoting Sidney Hook, *Heresy Yes, Conspiracy No* (New York, NY: John Day, 1953).

work in identifying others and how names are used in order to 'know' someone. The importance of the word 'identify' shows Bester's use of names as a source of personality and identification for his characters, as well as the presumption that external identity can stem from other people's perceptions, with naming playing a key part. When questioned on his name, Boyne states, '"Boyne. As in Boyne, Battle of"' (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 129). The reader can presume Boyne takes his name from a poster behind Macy asking 'WHO FEARS MENTION THE BATTLE OF THE BOYNE?', therefore concretely demonstrating external influences over identity, even if intentional in this case.

When Macy discovers that the money Boyne paid him is counterfeit (or rather, not been invented yet), he storms into the tavern's back room shouting, '"Where's the thief? Boyne, he calls himself. More likely his name is Dillinger"' (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 134). While this could be seen as Macy associating Boyne with a known criminal due to using 'fake' money, it further speaks to the fluidity of names and their ability to characterise an individual.[28] The choice of 'Boyne' as name indicates a mask used by the character to protect his real self, just as Oddy uses masks to distance himself from the implications of Odysseus. Thus, Bester continues the theme of self-created names being potentially more accurate than given names, though Knight seems to subvert this formula, at least on the surface.

Knight's name comes into play more through his interactions with Boyne than through direct characterisation. Boyne argues for Knight to give up the almanac by claiming that though it may help him be successful, he will regret it later. Ultimately, Knight does relinquish the almanac rather than using it to unfairly achieve some semblance of the American Dream. This would appear as if Knight, unlike other characters discussed so far, has lived up to his name, therefore lacking any ambiguity through a fluctuation of meanings and associations. Knight does attempt to prove why he should use the almanac before handing it over, however, so the incident is not without conflict. On the surface, it would appear that this struggle is singular and does not represent any deeper crisis of identity. However, this assumption would exclude the circumstances of Knight's abandonment of his opinion, as the argument itself does not speak to a crisis but the way in which he loses the argument does.

[28] Mansur G. Abdullah and others, 'John Dillinger', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (2015) <http://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Dillinger> [accessed 9 June 2015].

In response to Boyne's request for the almanac, Knight argues that the book promises '"The knowledge that life is worth planning. There's the atom bomb"'. Even after Boyne indicates himself as proof of continuing life, Knight repeats his fear of '"But the atom bomb . . ."' (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 132). The anxiety surrounding the Cold War and nuclear weapons is portrayed through dialogue but the use of ellipses following Knight's second statement indicates both the uncertainty of the war and Knight's own uncertainty regarding the strength of his argument, thus mirroring Cold War and personal anxieties. The fear of the future is only one factor to the argument though, as Knight also mentions the stock market and gambling as reasons to use the almanac for money and security (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 130). This desire for the American Dream of success and money would here be achieved through a form of cheating, thus undervaluing the end result.

Boyne expresses all the ways in which the book could be used for gain and when he asks for the almanac, Knight says to Jane, '"If everything he says is true we can refuse and live happily ever after."' Though it would seem Boyne's arguments have worked against him, Jane responds with, '"There may be money and success in that book, but there's divorce and death, too"' (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 133). Directly after this, Knight tells Boyne to take the almanac. It appears Knight has not made this decision himself but rather allowed Boyne and Jane to make the decision for him. Knight claims that the book will bring him wealth and give him the '"world in [his] pocket"'. Boyne interjects by saying that '"you are only repeating the dreams of childhood"'. This reference to childhood in connection with Boyne's insistence that Knight '"Seek a mature argument"' indicates a crisis within Knight that is not revealed in the story but can be inferred through subtle clues (Bester, 'Of Time', p. 131). Freud wrote that, in childhood, the 'ego is feeble and little differentiated from [the] id'.[29] This adult versus child conflict could be seen as an ego versus id conflict as the greed for riches and success are similar to the primitive, unformed impulses spoken about in 'Oddy and Id'.

Knight's short-term considerations of 'money and success' are set against Jane's long-term ones of 'divorce and death', thereby setting Knight apart from the other two individuals, as Boyne is clearly looking long-term as well. Knight's repetition of worry over the atom bomb may seem like an excuse for short-term

[29] Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', p. 23.

thinking, as the fear of nuclear annihilation surely crippled much hope for the future. As Paul Boyer writes, 'In the brutal and strident climate of the early Cold War, hope shrivelled. What remained was fear […] and a dull sense of grim inevitability.'[30] This acceptance of the situation indicates a lack of desire to change it by attempting to prevent the war and is an example of taking the state of world affairs for granted, as will be discussed in relation to 'Hobson's Choice'.[31]

Despite this potential external war, Knight's internal war over whether to keep or discard the almanac is as important to him as an individual as the atomic bomb is important to the whole of society. While the conflict between young and old may seem petty compared to Oddy's conflict, it does imply an underlying strife between conscious and unconscious. Knight consciously disagrees with Boyne's statement regarding wealth by ignoring the unconscious implications of how his internal self does agree with it. Alternatively, one could consider that Knight does genuinely disagree with Boyne but has been conditioned by society into believing that having a job and earning money is the appropriate way to do things. According to William H. Whyte Jr., 'there is almost always the thought that pursuit of individual salvation through hard work, thrift, and competitive struggle is the heart of the American achievement.'[32] Thus, Knight would have successfully repressed his own unconscious drives to the point of being unable to defend their impulses against outside influence. Repression indicating the Freudian concept that something is prevented from becoming conscious, Knight remains unable to make conscious self-imposed decisions. Freud also writes that 'the ego is that portion of the id which was modified by the proximity and influence of the modern world', thereby further indicating the split between Knight's conscious social self and personal unconscious self.[33]

In comparison to 'Oddy and Id', 'Of Time and Third Avenue' is less obviously a psychiatric work and could hardly be called one at all. However, it does espouse similar themes of the Cold War and conflicts with the self, psychological or

[30] Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 350.
[31] Alfred Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 112-26. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[32] William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 4.
[33] Sigmund Freud, 'The Unconscious', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 142-83 (p. 142); Sigmund Freud, 'The Dissection of the Psychical Personality', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 484-504 (p. 500).

otherwise. While Knight does not directly represent the split self as seen in Oddy, the internal conflict and representations of the power of outside influence are similar. There is not necessarily a resolution of the split self and less of a psychological impetus to the events taking place, but the use of similar psychological themes in discussing issues of the self and the Cold War show a continuing concern for the use, or lack thereof, of psychology and identity politics in wider society. What 'Of Time and Third Avenue' demonstrates is an acknowledgement of the multiple aspects of a personality, such as Knight's hold on his 'childhood', despite his adult self. Though it is not directly the point of the story, and certainly not commented on by any of the characters, it is clear that these concerns are still with Bester and, though less obviously than his previous short story, still form a basis for his characterisation, if not always his narratives. 'Of Time and Third Avenue' instead pushes towards an understanding of the war, the atomic bomb, and the disillusionment and loss of hope for the future. Essentially relegating war to the background, the accepted state of nuclear weapons is finally brought to the fore in 'Hobson's Choice' after being further implied in *The Demolished Man*.[34]

III.

Published in *Galaxy Science Fiction* between January and March 1952, *The Demolished Man* was Bester's first full-length science fiction novel. In 'My Affair With Science Fiction' (1975), Bester discusses how Horace Gold convinced him to write the novel and helped prepare it for magazine publication. Bester refers to *Galaxy* as being 'psychiatry-orientated' and Horace Gold as having 'psychoanalytic perception'.[35] Gold's own psychological disorder of agoraphobia perhaps also encouraged him to aid Bester in writing a psychological novel (Bester, 'My Affair', pp. 462, 442, 462). Mike Ashley comments that Gold 'wanted his stories to reflect the changes in society, via the soft sciences rather than the hard'.[36] It is therefore

[34] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man*, intro. by Harry Harrison (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text. The title will be abbreviated as *TDM*.
[35] Bester also refers to *Astounding* as hard science and *Fantasy & Science Fiction* as wit and sophistication.
[36] Mike Ashley, 'Science Fiction Magazines: The Crucibles of Change', in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by David Seed (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 60-76 (p. 68).

unsurprising that Bester's particular approach to writing was well-received in such a magazine under such an editor.

Bester's use of the split identity is explored in the novel through protagonist Ben Reich, who, like Oddy, has a conscious self unaware of its unconscious desires. Though both selves strive for the same outcome, the murder of Craye D'Courtney, the motivation differs and Reich initially remains unaware of the true reason for his actions. In 'Writing And *The Demolished Man*', Bester writes that 'the protagonist - who is actually the killer - does not really know his own motivation. It is concealed within himself and we are now deeply involved in psychiatry'.[37] Bester's emphasis that Reich's lack of knowledge regarding his motivations is not just a narrative device underscores it as a genuine psychiatric consideration within the narrative. Attention paid to the split identity between motivations and awareness is perhaps a reflection of Bester's own approach to writing. He claims the author needs to maintain a 'split personality' in which the self simultaneously participates in the text but also externally watches himself and the other characters. This splitting of the author's personality is referred to as 'rotten' and 'hell', which reflects Bester's negative portrayal of identity crises.[38] Reich's lack of psychological awareness emphasises the self unaware of its motivations, as Colin Wilson writes that 'In practice […] most "great criminals" turn out to be […] Freudian neurotics'.[39] Reich's ability to elude the law coupled with his identity crisis causes him to fit Wilson's assumption fairly well.

Bester pushes this sense of the split self further than his previous works, likely because the length of a novel afforded him the ability to explore concepts too vast for the limited space of a short story. Though his other works of the early 1950s hint at ideas of masks and the internal versus external, *The Demolished Man* demonstrates how the shaping of the self can be largely affected by society, taking further the sense of conformity and McCarthyism touched upon in his other works. While internal identity is meant to be subject to control by an individual, Bester explores whether this is always the case.

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[37] Alfred Bester, 'Writing and *The Demolished Man*', in *Redemolished*, pp. 542-51 (p. 547).
[38] Alfred Bester, 'Alfred Bester', in *Hell's Cartographers*, ed. by Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison (London: Futura Publications, 1976), pp. 217-19 (pp. 217-18). Malcolm Cowley's discussion on this will be considered in chapter 5. Malcolm Cowley, *The Literary Situation* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1961), p. 62.
[39] Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1956), p. 170.

In discussing *The Demolished Man*, it is useful to start with the original prologue to the novel, as published in *Galaxy* in 1952.[40] The prologue sets up the novel's approach to psychology and the association with Espers (a term originally coined in 'Oddy and Id' when the professors are attempting to decipher how Oddy is able to subconsciously rework world events in his favour), those who are capable, in varying degrees, of telepathy.[41] It further sets out the idea that one's mental self could be unknowable on the surface and that telepathy offers an insight into the unconscious. For psionics to be needed for this insight either shows telepathy as eliminating the need for basic psychology or that one must develop telepathic powers in order to penetrate the self, as Freud surmises that the unconscious self could never be conscious.[42]

The prologue takes place prior to telepathy being widespread and publicly used. When Larry Gart reveals himself to Rhoda Rennsaeler as a telepath, she initially feels afraid that 'the privacy of [her] shame is being invaded'. Gart tells her that 'you have nothing to be ashamed of […]. We're all alike inside our minds. All of us'. Gart indicates that everyone's internal self shares the same checklist of 'shames [...] fears and vices [and] terrors' and that those who share their mental selves with others can become 'brothers below the conscious threshold' (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', pp. 536, 537). This shows an understanding not only of what is contained in the unconscious but that it is not an abnormal mental state to have such thoughts. Bester emphasises the idea that while having these thoughts is not abnormal, it is also not abnormal to be unable to control them as the ego 'is not master in its own house' as much 'of our mental life proceeds without our awareness'. Therefore, these unconscious thought processes are a typical aspect of a healthy mind.[43] Gart tells Rennsaeler that his ability to read minds is 'tempted by [...] compulsions to shock and destroy people . . . compulsions to destroy myself' (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', 537). In discussing his writing, Bester notes that '[he'd] always found high drama in compulsive types' ('My Affair', *Redemolished,* p. 467).

[40] Alfred Bester, '*The Demolished Man*: The Deleted Prologue', in *Redemolished,* pp. 529-41. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text. For a full discussion of this, see Richard Raucci, 'Introduction to *The Demolished Man*: The Deleted Prologue', in *Redemolished,* pp. 527-28.
[41] Jeff Prucher, *The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* (2007) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780195305678.001.0001>.
[42] Freud, 'The Unconscious', p. 163.
[43] Anna Freud, 'Introduction [The Meaning of Dreams]', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis,* pp. 77-80 (p. 77).

Ben Reich is no exception and the prologue establishes Bester's character preferences to the reader. This compulsion to self-destruction is reminiscent of Freud's concept of the 'death drive', thereby demonstrating the connection between compulsions and the destructive nature of identity crises.

When Rennsaeler asks Gart why he is sharing his own internal shames and fears, he tells her that it is to abate her hostility towards him for being able to see into her mind and uncover things of which even she may be unaware. By laying himself bare verbally, it makes up for her inability to lay him bare mentally. He tells her, 'I'm stripping myself psychologically naked for you' (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', 537). Not only is this a recognition of the place of psychology in exploring the internal, mental self but indicates a man aware enough of his own psychology to know what needs explanation and what is obvious from his external behaviour. Gart would be unable to do his job if he were not capable of recognising the difference between the conscious and unconscious self.

> I use my ability to help confused people. They come to me […] so sick they can't discover their problems. [...] I help them recognize their problems. While they talk, I listen to their broken thoughts. While they wander and flounder in confusion, I pick out the pieces […] I tell them what their crisis is. I make them see it.
>
> (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', 537)

Based on this description, Gart is essentially a psychoanalyst, albeit one that uses an unconventional method unavailable to contemporary society. Telepathy allows for an objective observer to examine an individual even if they are not in control of their own mind and cannot understand their unconscious self. If the conscious self is aware of certain behaviours but not aware of their source, it may result in a split personality that also suffers from a fear of the unknown self. Mark Jancovich considers the 1950s to have suffered from 'anxieties about the crisis of identity in which the monster comes from inside rather than from outside the individual'. The idea that 'neither the conscious nor unconscious mind was trustworthy' can be seen to feed this fear of the self and anxieties over identity.[44]

[44] Jancovich, pp. 266, 231.

The prologue also includes a court transcript in which the participants are concerned over the admissibility of Esper testimony in court. Mr. Lecky argues that Esper testimony is not an invasion of privacy and that society is aware of an individual's ability to remember and forget details subjectively but 'in all sincerity'. He argues that 'Objective truth does not exist in the psychoanalytic sense and our courts have affirmed and reaffirmed the psychoanalytic principle in a long line of cases' (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', 539). Not only does this set up psychology as a long-term serious science but also shows an understanding of the differences between the conscious and unconscious. Though an individual may repress or divulge a memory at will, the fact that they do so 'in all sincerity' indicates that they may not be in control of what becomes repressed or what can be recalled once it has been repressed. Freudian concepts of repression are in line with Bester's approach to this tension between conscious and unconscious. Repressed memories are said to have 'an impulsion to break through into consciousness'. As such, though repression may be caused by the individual, it can also be controlled by unconscious drives over which the individual has no power.[45]

Mr. Lecky continues to argue that 'Two hundred years ago the human mind was imagined to be a thing of shame. Concealment was the strange custom of that time. But we have progressed far beyond such medieval concepts' (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', 539). The reference to concealment echoes the idea of masks, psychological numbing, and repression explored here and in Bester's other works of the early 1950s. More than just concealment from others, there is also a sense of self-concealment. This self-concealment may not be conscious but rather a desire to avoid the potential shame and fear of being unable to fully understand the workings of the self. Representing the eschewing of psychology, and the repression of the psyche, as being a 'medieval concept' echoes Bester's desire to indicate to the public the need for psychology to understand the mind, making contemporary society the past of which Mr. Lecky speaks.

What the prologue achieves is to set the reader up for a psychological, inverted detective novel wherein characters are motivated by impulses and drives. By focusing less on the crime and more on the psycho-drama, the internal workings of the characters take precedent over external factors such as Reich's position within

[45] Freud, 'The Unconscious', pp. 150-51; Freud, 'The Dissection of the Psychical Personality', pp. 494-95.

corporate America. Little description of external setting is given except when relevant to a particular character or war. As such, the novel is mainly comprised of dialogue which offers a continuous shifting of identities. Reich's murder of D'Courtney would be more straightforward if not for Reich being unaware of his identity as D'Courtney's son and therefore unaware of his own motivation for the murder. His unconscious desire to murder his father overtakes his desire for a company merger, when his unconscious self causes his conscious self to misread a memo. However, because Reich is unaware of the underlying cause, he remains ignorant that there is anything amiss about his reaction.

Reich initially believes that he murdered D'Courtney because of a profit motive, when in fact, he did it out of passion. Only the Mosaic Multiplex Prosecution Computer, a 'cold-blooded, cynical monster of facts and evidence' is able to see this (Bester, *TDM*, p. 168). If the human inability to understand one's own self affects the ability to understand another's psyche as well, it then takes a mindless computer, which has no psychology, to realise that Reich is not acting out of conscious desire. If the police involved are incapable of comprehending the full power of the unconscious self, then they would be unable to utilise an understanding of it in apprehending criminals.

When Reich initially extends an offer to D'Courtney to merge their companies, the reader is shown the page from the Executive's Code Book that contains the code used both in the message Reich sends and that which he receives from D'Courtney. In receiving the code WWHG from D'Courtney, Reich shouts, 'REFUSED! I knew it! [...] If you won't let it be merger, then I'll make it murder' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 20). The key thing to note here is that WWHG actually means 'ACCEPT OFFER', though this is not directly indicated to the reader. The reader is rather required to return to the portion of the novel which shows the Executive's Code Book to see what the code actually indicates. The quick pace of Bester's narrative, however, encourages readers to accept Reich's interpretation by infecting them with the urgency of his emotional response. The growing awareness within the novel of Reich's mistake thus mirrors the reader's growing awareness of the psychological impetus behind his actions, unless the reader themselves pieces things together from the outset. This possibility of the reader being ahead of the narrative/protagonist echoes Bester's presumption of psychological awareness putting an individual mentally ahead of those who forgo it.

Interestingly enough, the set of codes revealed to the reader from the Executive's Code Book does not actually contain any code which equals 'REFUSE OFFER' and so there is actually no available code, as given to the reader, in which Reich's response would have been correct. Whether the reader is aware of the mistake or not does not drastically alter the reading of the novel except for a knowledge that Reich has misinterpreted D'Courtney's response; it does not indicate why he has misinterpreted it, thereby giving the reader only partial access to Reich's true motivation. In fact, the reader only has access to information that anyone would have, as the code itself and the memos sent and received are external items that could be read and interpreted by anyone. Lincoln Powell, the detective investigating the murder, later explains that 'Reich was subconsciously compelled to misunderstand the message', indicating how the unconscious and conscious can work against one another, without an individual's knowledge (Bester, *TDM*, p. 233). The codes are therefore only superficially relevant to the plot as they exist more as devices designed to initiate Reich's impulses.

The split self as demonstrated by a split understanding of Reich's motive is seen throughout the novel in more than just the crisis between Reich's conscious and unconscious desires. Ben Reich and Barbara D'Courtney are presented as two halves of a whole through them being step-siblings and therefore two parts united under a single parent. Barbara D'Courtney is in Powell's care after she witnesses her father's murder and she is reverted to a childlike state in order for her to be mentally built back up to where she can handle what she has witnessed. In the hopes of gleaning what happened out of her unconsciousness, Powell encourages her to get in touch with her id. In following her there, he discovers an image of Barbara herself, with the back of her head showing D'Courtney's face.

> [Powell] follows the Janus image down to a blazing channel of doubles, pairs, linkages and duplicities to [...] Ben Reich and the caricature of Barbara, linked side to side like Siamese twins, brother and sister from the waist upward, their legs turning and twisting separately in a sea of complexity below. [...] Barbara and Ben. Half joined in blood.
>
> (Bester, *TDM*, p. 150)

Not only has Barbara repressed her memories of Reich murdering her father, her unconscious id is also aware of the familial link between herself and Reich, just as Reich is somehow unconsciously aware of his familial link with Craye D'Courtney. It is implied that Reich was also unconsciously aware of his relation to Barbara as he is given the opportunity to kill her but refrains from doing so. The implication is that repressed knowledge still resides somewhere within the mind. Freud explains that the point of the process of repression is not to annihilate an idea or instinct but to render it incapable of being conscious and thus 'a part of the unconscious'.[46] This is evidenced by Barbara's repressed knowledge of the murder, which she is consciously unaware of, but which is still retained by her unconscious.

Reich's identity crisis is revealed through The Man With No Face, who frequently haunts Reich. It is revealed that The Man With No Face is actually Reich himself, contrary to Reich's earlier assumptions that the figure lacks a face because it is the face of murder. Reich is told that 'You'll never be able to run from him . . . hide from him', an indication that Reich is unable to escape The Man With No Face due to it being an aspect of Reich's own subconscious, thus demonstrating Reich's inability to escape from himself (Bester, *TDM*, p. 193). Powell asserts that The Man With No Face was a projection of Reich's conscience sent forth by his super-ego to punish him for murdering his father.

> Reich had never admitted to himself that he murdered because he hated D'Courtney as the father who had rejected and abandoned him. Therefore, the punishment had to take place on the unconscious level. Reich set those traps for himself without ever realizing it . . . in his sleep, somnambulistically . . . during the day, in short fugues . . . brief departures from conscious reality. The tricks of the mind-mechanism are fantastic.
>
> (Bester, *TDM*, pp. 234-35)

Reich's refusal to accept his identity ultimately led to this split self and the destructive nature of his identity crisis becomes clearer. Represented by The Man With No Face, this split moves from the internal space of Reich's unconsciousness

[46] Freud, 'The Unconscious', p. 142.

to the external as hallucination. With the novel beginning inside Reich's subconscious in the form of a dream, the narrative as a whole moves between the internal and external with the focus on psychology emphasising this movement. The Man With No Face's blank countenance symbolises a lack of identity waiting to be acknowledged which reflects Reich's need to recognise his own identity crisis and reconcile his two selves. This blank space waiting to be filled mirrors Reich's demolished, 'blank' self at the end of the novel, which will be later discussed more fully. Much of the narrative ground for the novel thus takes place in response to Reich's consciousness.

The Man With No Face as Reich's punishment can be seen in Freud's writing concerning the presentation of mental illness.

> [T]he ego gets itself punished by the super-ego. Illness is employed as an instrument for this "self-punishment", and neurotics have to behave as though they were governed by a sense of guilt which, in order to be satisfied, needs to be punished by illness.[47]

The Man With No Face is therefore a manifestation of Reich's guilt. Reich's illness can be seen in his split into two halves: the Reich society knows (the one who murdered D'Courtney for profit) and the Reich only his unconscious knows (the one who murdered D'Courtney because he was his father). The fact that The Man With No Face has no face indicates a lack of external identity and therefore no way for it to be identified based on appearance; a factor in identification just as necessary and useful as naming. The lack of an external identity does not necessarily indicate the lack of an internal identity but it does hamper Reich's ability to recognise this repressed aspect of himself.

The manifestation of The Man With No Face in Reich's dreams can be seen to represent this internal split through external signifiers. R. D. Laing writes that 'The divorce of the self from the body is both something which is painful to be borne, and which the sufferer desperately longs for someone to help mend'.[48] This longing can be seen in The Man With No Face's attempts to kill Reich due to an

[47] Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', p. 42.
[48] R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), p. 161.

assumption that Reich will neither be arrested nor undergo demolition for his crime. In death, Reich's split identity would be resolved through destruction. Referring to The Man With No Face, Powell tells Reich, '"I pray to God you'll never be able to save yourself from him"' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 193). As such, both Powell and The Man With No Face aim to mend Reich's split self. With The Man With No Face being an aspect of Reich himself, this can also be seen as Reich subconsciously aiming to mend himself.

The split self is further indicated in the conflict between Reich and Powell as well as through Powell himself, though to a lesser degree than in Reich. From their initial meeting, Powell recognises that something within Reich is missing. He later comments on the split aspect of Reich's personality, indicating that it is externally apparent to Powell despite being internally unknown to Reich. Thus, ideas of the need for an objective observer to understand aspects of the psyche unrealised within the subjective self are extended. '"You're two men, Reich. One of them's fine; and the other's rotten. If you were all killer, it wouldn't be so bad. But there's half louse and half saint in you, and that makes it worse"' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 84-85). This dialogue not only recognises the split nature of Reich's personality but the paired contrasts of 'louse' and 'saint' reflect Reich as murderer and Reich as redeemer, through the actions of The Man With No Face and the attempts to extract self-justice.

This commentary externally acknowledges Reich's internal battle between the two halves of himself. The Man With No Face's repeated attempts to kill Reich would not have occurred if Reich had been capable of reconciling his identity. Just as Reich is unable to control his id, so is he unable to control The Man With No Face, as the two aspects of himself are similar in their unknowability. Unknowable thus translates to uncontrollable. Therefore, The Man With No Face is Reich himself wearing a mask meant not only to protect himself from external prosecution, but from self-prosecution through his own super-ego. This can be seen in The Man With No Face itself as its lack of features can be seen as an external copy of the mask which Reich uses to mask his internal self. *The Demolished Man* thus establishes the super-ego as operating on the same plane as the id and outside the conscious level of the ego, in accordance with Freudian theory.

A merger between Reich's ego and his super-ego and id would have resulted in a stable ego that would not be controlled by primitive desires or plagued by an

over-active conscience. As Freud writes, 'It is as important for the ego to remain on good terms with the super-ego as with the id. Estrangements between the ego and the super-ego are of great significance in mental life.'[49] These aspects of the self may be inherently separate but they are designed to work in conjunction. This echoes the potentiality of the merger between Reich and D'Courtney as that would have also eliminated primitive desires in favour of a stable relationship, based on a union between father and son. When Reich tells Powell that he '"lost a great partner in [him]"', Powell responds by telling Reich that '"You lost a great man in yourself"' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 85). Powell's response holds its own double meaning in that while Reich has indeed lost his ability to be a 'great man', he has also, quite literally, lost himself within himself. By repressing parts of his own psyche, he has damaged his identity and left himself unable to be reconciled.

The exchange between Reich and Powell also indicates a pairing between the two men themselves, with Reich as criminal and Powell as detective being inherent opposites that are tied together. Powell himself is also a split man, as previously mentioned, and his assertion to Reich that he is 'two men' can also be self-applied. Powell's awareness of his own split tendency allows him an understanding not afforded Reich, who remains ignorant of his internal workings. Despite Powell's awareness, however, he remains unable to control the manifestations of his id that occasionally occur.

> [Powell] had attacks of what he called "Dishonest Abe" moods. Someone would ask Lincoln Powell an innocent question, and Dishonest Abe would answer. His fervent imagination would cook up the wildest tall-story and he would deliver it with straight-faced sincerity. He could not suppress the liar in him.
>
> (Bester, *TDM*, p. 27)

Though this split is less detrimental psychologically, it is still potentially socially and personally detrimental. Though an understanding allows Powell to mitigate any consequences, it does not remove the split, implying that, though Bester recognises the need for understanding, he acknowledges that it is not enough to cure the self.

[49] Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', pp. 41-42.

Rather than controlling the split, the understanding helps maintain an individual's self within the split. Powell is thus comparably healthier than Reich through his knowledge of his transgressive side. Thus, the split self is not aligned with concepts of good and evil but rather something that could afflict anyone no matter their social status or position.

Powell's name, Lincoln, further reflects this split self, as does the nickname 'Dishonest Abe'. Powell's name evokes that of Abraham Lincoln and his nickname of 'Honest Abe'.[50] The contrast between Lincoln and 'dishonest' shows another split between concepts that would normally be paired but have ended up at odds with one another, similar to Reich and Powell, who agree they would probably have gotten along if not for being on opposite sides of the law. Reich's name also follows Bester's approach to naming as a way to indicate identity or to emphasise an identity crisis. Reich, having obvious associations with Nazi Germany and the Third Reich, especially in the 1950s, reflects Reich's position in society. 'Reich', indicating a kingdom or monarchy, is reminiscent of Reich's company, called 'Monarch', which has its own meaning of 'sole and absolute ruler of a state'.[51] Suggesting a territory to rule, the name signifies power or control that Reich significantly lacks over himself. More than a mere literary device, Bester's attention to naming further infuses his narrative with a sense of the split self. By allowing his characters' identity crises to influence the narrative, Bester demonstrates the ability of the internal to affect the external and the external's ability to mirror the internal, making Bester's narratives similar to the reflective nature of the Cold War's mirroring of individual psychology.

In addition, reich also means 'rich', which Reich presumably is.[52] M. Keith Booker theorizes that 'success require[s] a selfless devotion to one's corporation and a ruthless determination to squelch the competition, both of which were felt to be incompatible with genuine selfhood'.[53] Using the merger as an excuse for murder prioritises the company over the self, as the murder is given a business reason rather

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[50] Richard N. Current, 'Abraham Lincoln', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (2015) <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln> [accessed 9 June 2015].
[51] 'Reich, n.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/161503?redirectedFrom=Reich#eid> [accessed 9 June 2015]; 'monarch, n.1', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/121083?rskey=Zv0FsR&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 9 June 2015].
[52] 'reich', in *Pocket Oxford German Dictionary: German-English* (2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780191735103.001.0001>.
[53] Booker, *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War*, p. 164.

than the more accurate personal reason. The desire for the destruction of the competition overrides personal desires and Reich's unconscious desire for D'Courtney's death is acted out through the company, demonstrating the destruction of Reich's selfhood for what he perceives as the good of the company. Reich's ignorance of the facts consciously does not excuse the fact that he was, in some way, aware of the true nature of the situation. Due to his split self and inability to reconcile with his id, this information remained unattainable to him, thereby making his 'genuine selfhood' incompatible with his conscious self which was more intent on business propositions than on his own psyche.

The fact that Reich is D'Courtney's son causes his real intention for murder to be an oedipal complex rather than a business transaction. David Seed describes this split as 'an oedipal conflict where Reich schizophrenically plays out the dissociated roles of business leader and the eraser of his own hated paternity'.[54] With the Oedipus complex being 'jealous and hostile impulses to the father', this hatred stems from an abandonment Reich was never consciously aware of and, therefore, could not know he suffered from.[55] However, his id both remembered and resented the situation, thereby creating the identity crisis by splitting itself off from a conscious that was unaware of its paternity, making the crisis self-imposed rather than environmental.

External identity is often subject to the influence of one's environment, though the choice of where and who to spend time with can give some semblance of control over this influence. The exchange between the self and the environment leads to a symbiotic relationship in which 'Our very personalities, really, depend in large part upon *all* the things in our environment, large and small, that exist outside our skins'.[56] It is no small detail that Powell repeatedly introduces himself as police Prefect as an attempt to influences others' perception of him by externally announcing his identity. In this way, Powell is utilising a verbal mask in order to socially garner respect. Arthur Koestler writes that 'the normal way of living with a

[54] David Seed, *Brainwashing: The Fictions of Mind Control: A Study of Novels and Films Since World War II* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004), p. 58.
[55] Anna Freud, 'Introduction [Human Sexuality]', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 271-76 (p. 273).
[56] Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, *Science Fiction and Postmodern Fiction: A Genre Study* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 99. Puschmann-Nalenz is quoting James Blish, 'Common Time', in *The Penguin SF Omnibus*, ed. by Brian Aldiss (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 566-87 (p. 584).

split mind was and is to patch it up with rationalisations and subtle techniques of pseudo-reasoning'.[57] Powell's conviction that '"You are what you think"' shows his attempts to overcome his split self by insisting on the definition of himself as police Prefect (Bester, *TDM*, p. 28). Powell's mantra echoes Descartes' conception of the self but the presence of telepathy extends the notion from the philosophical internal to a reality where what you think affects how others perceive you. Therefore, the humorous assumption of the nickname 'Dishonest Abe' can be seen as a way to minimalize the affect this version of himself has, thus rationalising it away as a trivial inconvenience rather than something indicative of a larger psychological problem.

Powell's attention to social position could be tied to his ability as an Esper, since Espers often reside in important social positions, but it also indicates a desire to encourage others to identify him as more than just his ability. However, the interlocked nature of his telepathy with his job as police detective makes separating these aspects of his life difficult. Both versions of himself involve looking into things, but are separated between the internal (telepathy) and the external (crime). By proclaiming the title Prefect, he can be seen as more than just the title Esper, thereby breaking down the social boundaries regarding the split between Esper and non-Esper. As a result of the ability being innate rather than taught, Espers are an inherently exclusive portion of society.

When Powell enters the Esper Guild Institute, one of the things the reader is given a look at is the Esper pledge. It is perhaps important to note that a portion of the Esper pledge reads, 'The regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of mankind according to my ability', which is reminiscent of Karl Marx's 'From each according to his ability' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 92).[58] Though the associations of the Esper Guild with Marxism is not a main contention of the novel, it does flag up a conspiratorial element to the division between Espers and non-Espers. The social differences between Espers and non-Espers, such as Espers having their own financial laws or requirements to be with their own kind, seem to draw upon models of Communists and Communist sympathisers, thus raising the political implications of social divides. Whether it is 'right' or 'wrong' appears to be left to the reader and is used

[57] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), p. 260.
[58] Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), p. 17.

by Bester to take advantage of his contemporary political climate without necessarily stating an opinion on the virtues of the competing ideologies.

The Guild's Eugenic plan, further reminiscent of Nazi Germany and of social or political pressures in general, is indicated throughout the novel, especially in the approach to marriage.[59] When Mary Noyes propositions Powell to get married, she reminds him that '"*You must marry an Esper before you're forty, Linc. The Guild insists on that*"'. When a Solar Equity Advocate 2 arrives at Powell's Esper party, he brings with him a young girl he recently proposed to, who is currently a 3rd class Esper.[60] When Powell admonishes him for being harsh to his fiancée, he replies, '"*Don't be a romantic ass, Powell. We've got to marry peepers. I might as well settle for a pretty face.*"' What this dialogue indicates is that Espers are not only required to marry, they must marry other Espers, presumably in order to reproduce and advance the telepathic gene pool. When Barbara says she is in love with Powell, he tries to convince her otherwise, knowing that their relationship could be nothing more than an affair as Barbara is not an Esper. Powell tells Mary, '"*You know the Guild won't let us marry normals*"' (Bester, *TDM*, pp. 29, 33, 204. Author's own emphasis). Besides emphasising the Espers' Communistic inclination to put society before the individual, Powell's use of the word 'normals' to describe non-Espers furthers this social split. Even in a civilisation advanced enough to develop telepathy, there is still a sense of 'normal' and abnormal' (as defined by the novel); a continuing idea of the 'other'.

The character of Jerry Church demonstrates this clash between Esper and 'other' by exemplifying the need to belong with others of the same kind. Church desires reinstatement in the Esper Guild, which stems more from a desire to be around others like himself than for power or status, since being out of the Guild does not strip him of his telepathy. However, him being out of the Guild means he is now an 'abnormal' surrounding by 'normals', a situation similar to the paranoia created through McCarthyism when a Communist would no longer be able to rely on fellow Communists for protection or refuge. Sympathisers were accused that their 'name, efforts, money or other support gave aid and comfort to the Communist

[59] Philip K. Wilson, 'eugenics', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (2015) <http://www.britannica.com/science/eugenics-genetics> [accessed 9 June 2015].
[60] The different classes are based on telepathic ability, with 3rd being the lowest.

conspiracy'.[61] Therefore, comfort implies more than just practical resources. It also indicates a sense of community or belonging.

What this also shows is a need for confirmation from others in regards to one's own sense of self. At the beginning of the 1950s, there was a 'shift to an emphasis on approval by the Other [which was] fraught with a number of inherent difficulties, including a tendency for individuals to feel unauthentic and inadequate in their quest for approval'.[62] Church may still have his ability, but without membership in the Guild, he is no longer an 'Esper' in the sense that others are; he no longer belongs to a particular community. An external self that requires the perception of others in order to exist implies a weak internal self unable to maintain its own identity. 'Our fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definition is […] concocting and controlling the story we tell others – and ourselves – about who we are.'[63] The emphasis on the presentation of the self to the 'other' creates a requirement for an 'other' who will perceive this story of ourselves and thus feedback into our internal selves. Without the 'other', the internal self lacks an external self with which to exist in conjunction with. The resulting identity crisis evolves out of an inability to reconcile the two selves and the inability to maintain identity with just the health of one's psyche.

Ellery West's story to Reich about the community of deaf-mutes (a precursor to Bester's further use of this concept in *The Stars My Destination* with the Skoptsy Colony) accentuates the notion that personal identity, including when gained through physical aspects, becomes validated when others understand and accept it.[64] The nature of community makes external validation more influential than internal validation and this is especially relevant when the others in a community have similar aspects of identity, such as Espers all having some level of telepathic ability. According to John Perry, 'Similarity of psychological characteristics – a person's attitudes, beliefs, memories, prejudices, and the like' indicate the same person even if they are bodily different.[65] Therefore, Espers would be able to recognise themselves as reflected in the abilities of others, consequently decreasing the sense

[61] Albert Fried, ed., *McCarthyism: The Great American Red Scare*, p. 129. Fried is quoting [unknown], *The Road Back* (New York, NY: AWARE, 1952).
[62] Booker, *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War*, p. 13.
[63] Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 418.
[64] Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, ed. by Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).
[65] Perry, 'A Dialogue', p. 373.

of a split between 'self' and 'other' and encouraging a group dynamic. West tells Reich that the deaf-mutes '"had to live in their own community or they couldn't live at all"' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 17). This desire to be around others like yourself points to a desire for conformity, as Jancovich calls it 'appealing and even at times necessary because it helps to order and repress the painful uncertainties of social existence'.[66] Indicating the need for conformity in social existence separates this need from the internal self, implying conformity is not an internal need and that the excessive use of social masks can lead to the identity crises Bester portrays in many of his characters. As R. D. Laing points out, for someone unable to reconcile their self with society, 'There is still an "I" that cannot find a "me".'[67] This concept is especially poignant when considering that the 'I' represents the external identity (the pronoun used when describing yourself to others) and the 'me' represents the internal (the pronoun used when referring directly to oneself).

The 'normal' and 'abnormal' split between Espers and the rest of society elevates the sense of danger that Espers pose in the sense that there is no physical manner in which to identify them as such. Donald G. Baker claims that 'man's life is often shaped by external fears over which he has little or no control'.[68] Fear of the unorthodox here links with the Cold War's notion of 'norms'. Echoing the paranoia surrounding an inability to directly identify Communists in Bester's contemporary society, concerns over physical versus mental identity are raised, since political ideology is not a physical aspect, similar to telepathy. Referring to Communists, Jancovich explains that 'They are difficult to detect, and there is no rational way to identify them'.[69] This inability to determine whether one is or is not an Esper without needing to ask is something only non-Espers would need to do as they could not telepathically glean the information and so could easily be lied to. With identifying differences becoming separate from appearance, it furthers the distinction between Esper and non-Esper.

In addition, the fear caused by the unknowability of the 'other' can overshadow one's own self as a result of the inordinate concern over the self of another. As Jancovich writes, 'If paranoid horror is founded on a blurring of

[66] Jancovich, p. 70.
[67] Laing, p. 172.
[68] Donald G. Baker, 'Postwar Popular Fiction (1945-1960): America Was Promises', in *Postwar America: The Search for Identity*, ed. by Fred Krinsky and Joseph Boskin (Beverly Hills, CA: Glencoe Press, 1969), pp.13-20 (p. 20).
[69] Jancovich, p. 66.

distinctions between the normal and the abnormal [...], it is also based on a blurring of distinctions between [...] the conscious and the unconscious.'[70] This exemplifies Bester's approach to the split self and the use of telepathy in delving into the unconscious. The consciousness as something to be entered blurs the boundaries between the external and internal self and allows social penetration of private space. The forced wearing of a mental mask is almost required as a person being peeped, who themselves are not an Esper, has no way of knowing it is happening and, therefore, no way to prevent against it.

Telepathy is the more obvious difference between Espers and 'normals' and it gives Espers an advantage over anyone who lacks the ability or is a lower class than them. Jancovich speaks of the 'fear of a centrally-organised society which is ordered and controlled by experts'.[71] Though Espers are not necessarily experts, they do have specialised use of an exclusive ability. Espers do not actually control society but they do hold jobs in positions of social authority. Furthermore, the threat they pose to personal privacy, despite their rules to the contrary, is never absent and fear is a method of control, whether intentional or not. This is something touched upon in the court transcript in the prologue as Mr. Lecky proclaims, '"What are you afraid of? If your witnesses are telling the truth, my man will peep them and confirm it"' (Bester, 'Deleted Prologue', p. 539). Jancovich expands on the danger of experts by explaining that they are 'dangerous and dehumanising' for the fact that 'they stifle intuition, imagination, and individuality'.[72] While this may not be the intended result of a telepathic society, the danger of having their thoughts read causes people to suppress aspects of themselves or to be afraid of their own psyche or identity. This self-suppression can be connected with the suppression of Communist sympathies or anything which could be taken as such. As Thomas Doherty states: 'Facing McCarthy and the forces he embodied, many Americans quivered with the fear that unfettered opinions had dire consequences, that agents of the state might disrupt their lives on the basis of a casual remark.'[73] The suppression of the self within the Esper society can thus be seen to echo suppression of the self in American society through fear of the internal self being made public or misinterpreted.

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[70] Jancovich, p. 230.
[71] Jancovich, p. 57. This concept will be returned to in the section on 'Disappearing Act' (chapter 2), where Bester directly deals with the detrimental results of 'experts'.
[72] Jancovich, p. 67.
[73] Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 16.

However, though this split between 'normals' and 'abnormals' may be potentially detrimental to society as a whole, the telepathic ability itself allows Espers to broaden their own identity and present themselves to others in newer and potentially more accurate ways. Esper communication helps to create new personal identities as well as a new internal-external identity, specifically through the thought patterns they are capable of intentionally creating.[74] A particular thought pattern has now become available to outsiders through telepathy, thereby becoming a way of externally identifying oneself. Bester's typography thus allows for an internal abstract to take physical shape. By permitting a more harmonious relationship between internal and external selves, this potentially lessens the threat of a split self and resulting identity crisis.

However, whether Esper or not, the importance of internal privacy can lead to self-censorship. An adjustment of thought patterns or the use of 'blocks' to alter what Espers are capable of perceiving within a consciousness changes not only other people's perceptions but self-perception as well, now that these patterns are both internal and external. Similar to the memo discussed earlier, this encoding of the narrative is designed to guide the reader through the novel without enabling independent examination of the information offered. The presentation of thought blocks reflects concepts like George Orwell's 'doublethink' and demonstrates how an individual would function inside their own head when it is no longer a safe place.[75]

Therefore, there still remains no full reconciliation even among Espers as privacy becomes harder and harder to achieve and the internal self must be continually altered in order to prevent unwanted peeping. These considerations echo the politics of surveillance within the McCarthy era and questions the Espers' ability to enter the minds of others without their knowledge. Bester's epigraph for the novel, which is repeated at the end of the work, refers to the 'Eye of God' and its ability to 'peep' mankind. David Seed writes that 'The all-seeing eye of God is secularised into a political nightmare of total control where the figure of visual observation signifies a whole elaborate system of monitoring and documentation'.[76] In discussing the insignificance of man's individual existence within the universe, Bester aligns

[74] For examples of this typography, see Bester, *The Demolished Man*, pp. 30, 31, 34, 81-83.
[75] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Penguin, 1975).
[76] David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 68.

society against something larger than it, similar to his explorations of the social encompassment of the individual.

The desire to maintain privacy causes both internal and external identities to be hampered and altered, creating multiple layers of identity. This begs the question of which identity is actually real or in control, as is the case with both Reich and Oddy. The blocks Espers are capable of putting up in their minds and in the minds of non-Espers help protect this privacy. However, they also function as a form of internal mask, by choosing precisely what other people can peep and thus how they identify and react to an individual. Similar to Reich's earworm, these methods are designed to externally mask internal thoughts, creating layers of masks within masks. In this way, internal masks are almost safer than external masks in that at least one is consciously and continuously aware of both the mask and the truth as they need to be actively maintained and protected. External masks are then more likely to lead to a split self as the separation of selves is furthered by the separation of internal and external.

After Reich has been convicted for his crime and the underlying motivation revealed, he is sent to Kingston Hospital to undergo the procedure which gives the novel its title: demolition. The novel describes demolition as involving the destruction of a man's entire psyche. It is explained, however, that this destruction is not the true horror of demolition but rather that 'the consciousness is never lost; [...] as the psyche is wiped out, the mind is aware of its slow, backward death' (Bester, *TDM,* p. 241). Destruction by purely external causes exemplifies the paralleled dangers of other external influences on the self, such as conformity.

Reich is subsequently referred to as 'the creature', indicating social perception of an individual completely lacking a psyche by demonstrating a latent understanding that psychology is a defining feature of the human. Referring to Reich as a 'creature' for lacking a psyche echoes the same lack of psyche in the Prosecution Computer and repeated references to it as 'the machine'. Though the actual act of demolition and Reich's existence afterwards is awarded little space in the novel, it does present the idea that one's psyche can be altered and 'rearranged'. Indicating a usefulness for the science of psychology, it emphasises Powell's surprise when Doctor Jeems informs him that criminals used to be caught just to be killed. Powell insists that it 'doesn't make sense', since a man can instead be cured psychologically and released back into society (Bester, *TDM*, pp. 242, 233, 242).

Conditioning individuals to fit into 'normal' society is, therefore, presented as a form of rehabilitation and Reich's demolition epitomises this idea.

The recreation of Reich's self into a 'healthy' mind inherently creates a dichotomy between 'normal' and 'abnormal' and demonstrates Thomas S. Szasz's discussion of the 'social rehabilitation of the mentally ill – that is, conversion of a social misfit into a socially useful citizen'.[77] Psychotherapy as a political curing of the 'abnormal other' politicises psychology as a method of control rather than healing. The danger of a focus on 'socially useful' rather than 'psychologically healthy' can be seen in the creation of internment camps in the early 1950s. Rather than allow subversive elements to exist within society, it was deemed safer to simply remove them without any attempts at 'rehabilitation'. The Emergency Detention Act (1950) allowed for the imprisonment of subversive elements, as defined by the government, and held without trial for as long as deemed necessary. Despite being vetoed by President Truman, six camps were created but were never used. However, 'no one could know that from the perspective of 1952.'[78] The knowledge and fear of camps, which were 'designed to protect the internal security of the United States from the fancied or real danger of Communist infiltration' would have been sufficient to encourage conformity, similar to the fear of McCarthyism.[79] Thus, psychological fear outweighed any physical threat.

From Reich's demolished mind comes fragmented thoughts which Powell overhears. Reich's gratefulness to Powell for the gift he gives him comes across as the thought fragment '*Powell-peeper-Powell-friend*' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 242). Reich's recognition of Powell as friend despite him being a peeper causes Powell to realise the effect of sociologically devised barriers between individuals. Reich's gratefulness to Powell as '*friend*' echoes the idea of friendship between the two indicated earlier in the novel. With them on the same side of the law again, they would now be capable of maintaining such a relationship. Powell's reaction to this is to telepathically shout to any who can hear him.

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[77] Thomas S. Szasz, *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 220.
[78] Michael Ventura, '1952, Elia Kazan and the Blacklist in Hollywood', in *A New Literary History of America*, ed. by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), pp. 832-37 (p. 837).
[79] Cornelius P. Cotter and J. Malcolm Smith, 'An American Paradox: The Emergency Detention Act of 1950', *The Journal of Politics*, 19 (1957), 20-33 (p. 21).

> *You must tear the barriers down.* […] *We see the truth you cannot see . . . That there is nothing in man but love and faith, courage and kindness, generosity and sacrifice. All else is only the barrier of your blindness.*
>
> (Bester, *TDM*, p. 243. Author's own emphasis)

Blindness implies personal prejudices to social situations but, even if created socially, are enacted individually and thus can be individually eradicated. This reaction to Reich's unconscious mental representation of Powell as 'friend' shows an understanding of the difference between Reich's conscious and unconscious self and how actions may not mirror thoughts. By recognising social responsibility for other members of society (a theme explored further in *The Stars My Destination*), Powell is a precursor to Gully Foyle in his desire to create social harmony without underlying conformity or distrust. The 'we' mentioned most likely indicates Espers and is a call for those without the added ability of telepathy to find a different way to tear down barriers and understand oneself and others, presumably meant to be psychology.

Alongside this exploration of the psyche, Bester continues the theme of war and the connections between the internal self and external society. As shown, an aspect of the psyche is difficult to destroy without destroying the man himself. Even though Reich will be rebuilt into a whole man about his demolition, he will no longer be 'himself'. According to John Perry, 'Similarity, however exact, is not identity.' In addition, 'personal identity cannot just amount to bodily identity.'[80] As such, though Reich may be physically the same individual, according to Perry, his identity has essentially been destroyed. However, he does appear to retain particular memories, which, more than bodily identity, indicate the self. As such, Reich continues to precariously balance between two versions of his identity.

As with the Cold War essentially being a war of ideologies, or a 'war of nerves' as Paul Boyer calls it, so does *The Demolished Man* exemplify the concept of a war of thoughts over physical war.[81] While D'Courtney's murder is a physical action, what results is a conflict of the psyche between Reich and Powell. An understanding of how the other thinks is more important than a direct approach, as

[80] Perry, 'A Dialogue', pp. 370, 376.
[81] Boyer, p. 335.

paralleled by the relatively inactive Cold War. While the Korean War had begun by the start of the publication of the novel, the Cold War as a whole was still cold. The Korean War would then be the real world 'hot war' equivalent to Reich's 'hot war' on D'Courtney, with the 'cold war' of the psyche paralleling the actual Cold War. Reich's gift to Maria Beaumont, whose party he uses to get close enough to D'Courtney in order to murder him, is a book of party games. Reich destroys all the games except one; this particular game allowing a dark, uninhibited route to D'Courtney. As Reich explains to himself, 'When his proxy murders were finished, he had reduced every game to incomplete fragments' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 335). These 'proxy murders' are what enable Reich to reach his greater goal, just as the Korean War, in conjunction with containment policies and NSC 68, was meant to help stem the reach of Communism and, by association, the Soviet Union.[82]

The novel does briefly reference the threat of physical destruction by war and Bester uses it to continue the theme of pairing explored in his other works. Though the cause is not specified, the prologue hints at pending war and Bester likens the technology of Nulgee to nuclear weapons or Communism: 'there were several wars pending, and the armies were fighting to stifle Nulgee for insecure reasons of security' ('Deleted Prologue', p. 534). The insecurity mentioned here regarding Nulgee and supposed 'reasons of security' could echo either the obtainment of nuclear weapons in an attempt to prevent war or the use of war to prevent the spread of Communism, both masking insecurity under the guise of national security. Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk write that we need to 'maintain a context of security within which we can play out our individual struggles'.[83] These struggles as forms of personal insecurity require social security within which to operate.

The range of fields which utilise concepts of security means that psychological security can be easily politicised while national security can have a substantial effect on psychology. Zygmunt Bauman considers cultural conflicts to be 'a constant threat to social integration – and also to the feeling of individual security

[82] Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 1-9; Suri, p. 224; Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou, *America since 1945: The American Moment* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), p. 52; Jeffrey Walsh, 'American Writing of the Wars in Korea and Vietnam', in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing*, ed. by Kate McLoughlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 226-38 (p. 226).
[83] Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk, *Indefensible Weapons: The Political and Psychological Case Against Nuclearism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1982), p. 24.

and self-assurance. This in turn creates and maintains a state of high anxiety'.[84] Security is thus a reflective concept between the individual and society. The collectivisation of these individual struggles across the mass public allows for a creation of '"social security" and of something we call "national security"'.[85] Though the Pennsylvania Station in New York City is not claimed to have been destroyed by war, Bester carefully phrases its decline as being a result of 'the misty confusion of the late XXth century' (*TDM*, p. 49). Reflecting the general atmosphere of Bester's contemporary era, this could imply that that 'confusion' led to the use of the atomic bomb, thus indicating that weapons of 'security' helped play out worries of 'insecurity'.

Additional pairings used to reflect the private and public include Maria Beaumont; host of the party that Reich attends. She is given the nickname, The Gilt Corpse, indicating an attempt to disguise destruction with lavishness. The split pairing of death and wealth is not the only pairing regarding her as she is also described as having 'intimate enemies'. The ornate orchid room where Reich finds D'Courtney is reminiscent of a womb, though it is now so neglected and withered as to exude death, or, continuing the womb-like imagery, no longer able to produce life. The fact that D'Courtney dies in this room furthers the imagery and emphasises the Freudian focus on sexuality and death. It is also worth noting that the entrance to the room itself is set between 'paintings of the Rape of Lucrece and the Rape of the Sabine Women' (Bester, *TDM*, pp. 49, 55). The modern meaning of rape as sexual violation furthers this connection between the womb and destruction as well as creating a relation between women of ancient Rome and Beaumont's mansion being designed in a Roman style.[86] Again, destruction has been paired with decadence and, like Beaumont's nickname, naming has mirrored environment, creating an interplay between the personal and social.

Further, the description of the destroyed ceramics plant is a more overt reference to the possible destruction of war. The whole Bastion West Side is said to be a war memorial. 'Its ten torn acres were to be maintained in perpetuity as a stinging denunciation of the insanity that produced the final war. But the final war, as usual, proved to be the next-to-the-final' (Bester, *TDM*, p. 111). The use of the

[84] Zygmunt Bauman and Benedetto Vecchi, *Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p. 82.
[85] Lifton and Falk, p. 24.
[86] [unknown], 'Lucretia', in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (2015) <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Lucretia-ancient-Roman-heroine> [accessed 10 June 2015].

word ‘insanity’ echoes the repetition of ‘excessive’ and ‘mistake’ that would be found in Bester’s subsequent work, ‘Hobson’s Choice’. ‘Insanity’ could also be taken literally to imply that the psychological state of the nation advanced to a point of mental disorder, both figuratively and literally mirrored in the events of the Cold War. The obvious dislike for the destruction of war can be found in Bester’s diction, such as ‘torn’, ‘stinging’, ‘denunciation’, and ‘insanity’. The point about the final war never being the final points to a pessimism regarding the usefulness of the Cold War. Though the event has been historicised in the context of the novel, it is not contemporary historical memory. By drawing on World War II and the potentiality of a World War III, Bester is effectively playing on the fears of his readers to examine the connections between society and war.

The Demolished Man, being allowed the breadth of a full-length novel, brings together and explores those themes and ideas found throughout Bester’s other works of the early 1950s. Ideas of McCarthyism and Communism are here further explored in the consideration of Espers and their place in society, emphasising the dangerous use of masks and the fear of experts. As with previous works, the novel touches upon the destructive outcome of a possible nuclear war and mirrors it with examples of personal destruction. Ben Reich is a reimagined and deeper exploration of the character of Oddy, showing the cause and effect of an identity crisis and the associated split identity that is characteristic of such a crisis. Reich’s identity crisis reflects the repeated use of paired contrasts throughout the novel, demonstrating the interplay between internal and external. Additionally, Reich’s split self is coupled with Powell’s split self, though they suffer from a crisis of identity on varying levels and with differing degrees of awareness. Though, as Bester shows, awareness or not, neither necessarily denotes control over one’s own mind.

IV.

‘Hobson’s Choice’, published August 1952 (*The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*), is Bester’s first short story to fully realise the relegation of the consequences of nuclear war to the background of social consciousness. Continuing the struggle often found within the self, not only to realise one’s own desires, but to maintain a coherent self within society, the story utilises its contemporary milieu in order to extrapolate a future where Robert Jay Lifton’s concept of ‘psychic numbing’

is enacted on a national scale. Foreshadowing the discussion of this and other concepts of the 1980s when 'nuclear criticism' became popular, Bester's considerations of the psychological aspects of nuclear war demonstrate the realisation that the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust can be just as, if not more, important than the event itself. This focus on nuclear post-apocalyptic landscapes can be found in both genre and non-genre texts of American and international origin, such as *Shadow on the Hearth* (US: 1950) or *On the Beach* (AUS: 1957).[87]

Jane Caputi suggests that psychic numbing, a term originally coined by Lifton, is a direct result of nuclear weaponry and that 'those same weapons which have so totally changed our world characteristically act to stagger our minds into numbness [...] and profoundly impair our capacities to come to terms with the realities of nuclear weapons'.[88] Lifton and Falk refer to this effect as a collective form of 'mental anesthetization' meant to override fear, depression, and anxiety as a form of psychological defence.[89] Similarly, Thomas Wear labelled this 'maladaptive behavior' a mental disorder, calling it a 'passive, apathetic attitude' that was unfortunately accepted as 'normal'.[90] By numbing oneself to nuclear war in order to deny its potentiality, one is then unprepared for its occurrence. Therefore, a continuously numbed state is encouraged in order to protect oneself from a situation never properly anticipated. Caputi claims that '"psychic numbing" prevails as one of the hallmarks of consciousness in the Nuclear Age'.[91] Perhaps then, it can be seen how Bester, alongside other authors, was in a position to foreshadow critics such as Lifton and Wear. By encouraging contemporaries to consider such psychological attitudes towards nuclear war, the danger of a mentality which took the present situation for granted, and therefore unchangeable, could be exposed.

Within the narrative, Bester references the atom bomb only once and events surrounding its usage are not mentioned at all. 'Hobson's Choice' thus examines the dichotomy between personal and collective survival post-apocalypse and the social understanding required to produce effective coping methods, rather than the war

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[87] Judith Merril, *Shadow on the Hearth* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1953); Nevil Shute, *On the Beach* (London: Heinemann, 1957).
[88] Jane Caputi, 'Psychic Numbing, Radical Futurelessness, and Sexual Violence in the Nuclear Film', in *The Nightmare Considered: Critical Essays on Nuclear War Literature*, ed. by Nancy Anisfield (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991), pp. 58-70 (p. 58).
[89] Lifton and Falk, p. 276.
[90] Thomas C. Wear, 'Nuclear Denial Disorder', *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 15.3 (1987), 215-18 (p. 215).
[91] Caputi, p. 58.

itself. Bester refers to the event as ‘one of those military mistakes of an excessive nature’ and again as an ‘excessive military mistake’ (‘Hobson’s Choice’, pp. 114, 115). The platitude that everyone makes mistakes is accentuated by Bester’s repeated use of ‘excessive’, demonstrating a belief that the atom bomb is a less than necessary tool of war and that dropping it is regretful regardless of the reason, making the circumstances of its use irrelevant. The fact that both the United States and the Soviet Union had already obtained ready-to-use atom bombs in preparation for war and as a threat against the opposing nation meant the only thing left to prevent was its use, which cannot properly be argued against without showing the consequences.[92] Though the United States would already know what it was like to drop the bomb, the consequences would not be lived experience for the American public. Due to this ignorance over the results of nuclear destruction, psychic numbing would have had few obstacles to overcome as an escapist coping method.

Addyer, the protagonist, is introduced as entertaining escapist fantasies on a daily basis, though they are not described as resulting from his situation. His fantasy of being the last man on Earth is the most relevant though even that is referred to as occurring through a ‘fluke’ rather than anything nuclear related (Bester, ‘Hobson’s Choice’, p. 113). This is perhaps a subconscious desire to evoke psychological recognition of the self in a post-apocalyptic society as Charles E. Gannon considers the ‘last man after nuclear annihilation myth’ to be a sign of the ‘frustrated desire for individual potency’, a distinctly lacking element in a post-apocalyptic society ruled by the psychology of the collective.[93] Addyer’s situation reflects the story’s title as he must accept this post-apocalyptical world as he has no other option.[94] Psychological numbing itself can be seen as a Hobson’s choice as one can either protect themselves from the situation in which they exist or else painfully live through it. The implication is that this is no choice at all as individuals are shown to inevitably choose psychic numbing since it is the only recourse of protection against the external world. The use of nuclear weapons can also be seen as a Hobson’s choice as, regardless of the choice to retaliate against their usage or not, the results would be the same: destruction.

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[92] The Soviet Union gained atomic capabilities in 1949. Suri, p. 222.
[93] Charles E. Gannon, *Rumors of War and Infernal Machines: Technomilitary Agenda-Setting in American and British Speculative Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 170.
[94] ‘choice, n.’, in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/32111?rskey=PsTuZx&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 10 June 2015].

Similar to the id and superego conflict in 'Oddy and Id', these contrasting aspects are not choices but innate oppositions. Freud writes that 'everything that happens in the id is and remains unconscious', in contrast with processes of the ego which '*can* become conscious'.[95] This defined split shows the separation between conscious and unconscious. Unlike the split that leads to an identity crisis, however, it is a split that is neither self-induced nor forced through repression, numbing, or external influences. This separation underscores the split produced through psychic numbing as the external environment would fail to match internal expectations. The relation to Cold War anxieties can be seen in the expectation that nuclear weapons were needed in order to prevent violence when, in reality, the production of these weapons simply furthered the abundance of weapons available and propagated violent expectations rather than lessened them.

When Addyer is investigating population counts across the country, he discovers that the 'closer [he] get[s] to the center of the country, the greater the increase' in the population. This surprises him due to the fact that 'the center of the country [...] took the heaviest punishment' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 114). Referring to the incident as punishment implies either that the atomic bomb was dropped by the enemy, thereby making it punishment in the course of war, or that it was a failure on the part of the domestic use of the atom bomb, thereby making it punishment for utilising nuclear weapons in the first place. This sense of punishment parallels what Jacqueline R. Smetak considers to be a sense of guilt felt by the American populace regarding World War II and that the Cold War was perhaps 'nothing more than our effort to force [the Soviets] to punish us for what we had done'.[96] If so, this could be seen as an attempt to force society to understand the consequences of nuclear war; not only by recreating in America the atmosphere of post-World War II Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but by making it a part of the scenery as a way of demonstrating the continuing consequences.

In this, Bester reflects many other nuclear fictions by having the United States being the country attacked rather than it attacking others. This exploration of the consequences of nuclear war indicates that mutually assured destruction is not just retaliation but a method to prevent such a state from being a normal aspect of

[95] Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', p. 19. Author's own emphasis.
[96] Jacqueline R. Smetak, 'Sex and Death in Nuclear Holocaust Literature of the 1950s', in *The Nightmare Considered*, pp. 15-26 (p. 17).

future society. Though the ability to take this post-apocalyptic society for granted implies that eventually society will adapt to such a situation, Addyer's eventual discovery of time-travel and its use (as explained by the character Jelling, essentially a time-travel 'immigrations officer') signifies Freudian repression and psychological numbing rather than acceptance, which can be seen throughout the story in Addyer's seeming indifference to his environment.

While travelling in an attempt to find an explanation for the population increase, Addyer is described as acquiring a 'subcritical radiation burn from a raid which fortunately left the railroad unharmed' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 115). Not only is public transport (a sign of progress and economic stability) portrayed as more important than individual human lives, Addyer is treated while continuing to travel and there is no further mention of the incident. The fact that raids continue to occur is perhaps why there is this muted acceptance and Addyer's self-inclusion within this numbed social response reveals both the 'mass public' reaction to war as well as his own psychological suppression of his condition. Lifton and Falk refer to this symbiotic psychological state as one of 'social madness', in which the individual colludes with the social 'thought structure' in order to manage and control nuclear destruction.[97] A sense of conformity and lack of individual importance would perhaps have been common in Bester's time, as McCarthyism was still an influence encouraging the concept of a homogenous American public.

In further describing the destruction wrought, Bester identifies the non-discriminatory nature of war. He mentions the 'ruined schoolhouse [...] the demolished telephone building [...] the gutted library, railroad station, Protestant church, Catholic church'. All things referred to are social institutions, with no mention of those who would have used them. With no associated commentary, Bester forces the reader, alongside his characters, to take the destruction for granted without opening a discussion on it. Addyer is later described as 'creeping between the deadly radiation glows and only occasionally butting his head against grave markers' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 118). Through diction, radiation is shown to still be considered deadly but not uncommon. Though the mention of graves is an acknowledgment of those who have died, they have been reduced to inconveniences rather than sites of remembrance. Paul Boyer writes that this numbed approach stems

[97] Lifton and Falk, p. 18.

from a ‘dimming [of] capacity to respond to the evidence of [the] senses’ due to prolonged exposure to a traumatic situation, which Sartre regards as mental desertion by a refusal to psychologically participate.[98]

When arriving at the county seat only to find it had been destroyed, Addyer is merely described as ‘[a] little annoyed’. The psychological need for people to simply accept the destruction as fact has enabled this tacit atmosphere. As explained in the story, ‘Nobody was interested in much more than painful survival these days’ (Bester, ‘Hobson’s Choice’, pp. 118, 117). Simply being alive post-war means regularly recognising the use of the bomb and its effects. This daily reminder then feeds into the daily suppression of this pain, thus compounding the psychic numbing needed to overcome the trauma. Franz Alexander speculated that ‘“a painless end” was preferable to “endless pain”’.[99] Those not killed in the blast or by radiation would then rely on the numbing of their psyche to end the self’s existence within this pain.

The idea of ‘painful survival’ echoes the exaggerated attention to public services and institutions over individual lives. As long as the nation as a concept survives, it is irrelevant the particular individuals within that nation and their state of mental or physical health, again prioritising the collective over the individual. This acceptance of something known to be ‘wrong’, an abnormal facet of society, indicates the situational blindness seen in Addyer’s response to nuclear destruction.

There is also a paralleling reference to McCarthyism found in the phrase ‘painful survival’. To avoid being put on the blacklist or outed as a Communist, accurately or not, many found themselves informing on others in order to survive. An early example of this is the Hollywood Ten, who were jailed for supposed subversion within the film industry. As Richard Pells explains, many had to confront certain questions that ‘were central to the hearings and investigations of the McCarthy era’, such as ‘ How far was an individual willing to go to defend a principle or protect his job?’ and ‘Was he willing to debase himself or harm others in order to support his family?’.[100] These considerations between personal survival and

[98] Boyer, p. 282; Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 575.
[99] Boyer, p. 342. Boyer is quoting Franz Alexander, ‘The Bomb and the Human Psyche’, *United Nations World*, November 1949, pp. 30-32. Boyer has not provided the specific page number/s and verification has been unsuccessful.
[100] Levine and Papasotiriou, p. 44. Levine and Papasotiriou are quoting Richard Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 301.

loyalty to friends and family created a tension between self-preservation and a perceived duty to submit to government investigations. This sense of 'painful survival' then, between public and private concerns, echoes that of individual survival in Addyer's post-apocalyptic landscape and the attention paid to public institutions.

When it is revealed that what Addyer was inadvertently investigating was time travelling individuals, thus the increase in population statistics, he is informed that all theories behind the use of time travel are incorrect. Instead, he is told that time travel is essentially used as a form of escape and as '"[p]sychological therapy for misfits who won't respond to any other cure"' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 120). The use of the word 'misfits' either demonstrates an attitude taken towards psychology in general, that those who need it are 'misfits', or that those in society who are incapable of the repressed, numbed approach of a conformed society are somehow abnormal.

The idea of psychological therapy as a last resort or that those who partake are misfits may have been the particular attitude Bester was writing against. By showing psychology's use and benefits, it was perhaps an attempt to destroy misconceptions. However, psychology as escape via the metaphor of time travel (implying a parallel between mental and physical escape and internal [individual] cure and external [public] cure) is shown to be as similarly destructive as escaping through psychic numbing, as indicated through Addyer's personal experience. As Carolyn Wendell writes, Bester's 'concern is people, and the science [...] is a mere convenience to place people into stress situations'.[101] The psychological aspect is not broached until closer to the end of the story, making both the reader and the protagonist ultimately discover it amid what was presumed to be an unrelated investigation. This can be seen to parallel the growing realisation of psychology's use in Bester's own time and its importance in regards to trauma therapy.

Attempts to parallel consequences of numbing and repression with the wartime destruction of society and extrapolating this comparison to indicate a similar sequence of events in the unconscious self emphasises Bester's approach to the conflict between the internal and external. Just as results of war are shown more than war itself, so are results of psychology shown more than the psychological process,

[101] Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), p. 16.

with both ultimately being taken for granted. Instead, what is aimed for is the realisation that psychology has a real effect that we have no control over, just like nuclear weaponry would have a real effect in the Cold War, over which the general public had no say.

Sartre writes that one is unable to live with war unless it is integrated into one's personal situation, but he also acknowledges the weight of this burden and its self-destructive significance. However, similar to Bester, Sartre indicates that escaping war cannot be achieved through a removal from one's own time period, which would only result in contradiction as an individual is not distinct from their own time; an idea which can be seen in Bester's discussion of Addyer's reaction to time travelling.[102] Since Addyer has discovered the time travelling operation without invitation, he is told he must be sent elsewhere in order to protect their secret. Addyer finds the concept enthralling and does not understand Jelling's 'mournful' attitude; the forced decision behind the 'Hobson's choice' of the title becomes clear, as Addyer is given the choice of where to go but not whether to travel in the first place.

However, Addyer relishes the opportunity to escape his own time. The idea of psychological therapy mentioned earlier is returned to. Just as other time travellers are said to be 'running' from their own time, Addyer is presumed to be so as well, since he declares that he lives in 'the worst age in all history'. Though as Jelling tells him, everybody across time believes the same thing about their own time period and that '"there's always somebody else somewhere else who think you live in the Golden Age"' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 125). As it turns out, the fantasy of escape proves to surpass any actual escape. The connection with the id of unconscious 'phantasy' is also present here further indicating the split between conscious expectations and unconscious understanding.

In embarking on his journey, 'Addyer traveled to the land of Our pet fantasy. He escaped into the refuge that is Our refuge, to the time of Our dreams'. The capitalisation of 'Our' brings the story full circle by recalling the opening line that 'you and I and Addyer are identical' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', pp. 126, 113). This idea of escape is, therefore, supposedly everyone's idea of escape with the implication being that everyone wants to be somewhere else, at sometime else.

[102] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 576, 575.

Another implication is that Bester's contemporary society as a whole is suffering from emotional detachment; not from a lack of emotions, but from putting energies into outlets that are easier to contain than others, such as McCarthyism. As Walter Shear comments, 'each citizen was continually urged to lead his/her whole existence […] with a constant awareness of the need for individual contributions to the war effort.'[103] This war effort would include protecting the nation from Communist influences, thereby making informing a patriotic duty as well as a fear. This reflective link between the world of the story and the real world indicates an attempt to cause the reader to realistically visualise the potentialities of the psychology Bester aims to discuss within the narrative.

Not long after leaving his own time, however, Addyer is said to realise 'that he had in truth departed from the only time for himself'. His psychological numbing has only prepared him for the state of one reality and one time: the one which created his numbing in the first place. Bester writes at the end of the story that 'today, bitter or sweet, anxious or calm, is the only day for us' ('Hobson's Choice', p. 126). This recognition of the need to accept and work on current affairs brings into question the concept of time travel as psychological therapy and the idea that escape is the best way to deal with one's problems. Bester's assumption that escape is useless stems from this presumption that one's psychological problems will follow you wherever you go and is implied earlier when Jelling says the time travellers are going '"Anyplace but where they belong"' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 124). This idea of belonging should have indicated to Addyer that escape was not the answer but the thrilling notion of living in a different century was more enticing than fixing, or psychologically coming to terms with, his own era.

Only once Addyer discovers the seemingly desirable nature of his own time period does he finally acknowledge the destruction around him. The split within Addyer between conscious ignorance of his environment and the unconscious knowledge that there is something wrong with it seems to resolve itself through his acknowledgement. However, the implication that his previous behaviour, and presumably the behaviour of many of those around him, is nothing more than a mask, reiterates ideas of repression and numbing and indicates the negative influence it can have on an individual's psyche. While the environment was previously treated

[103] Shear, p. 10.

as unnoticeable background, Addyer now recognises not only the physical consequences, but the mental ones as well. When told time travellers might find his time period to be the 'Golden Age', Addyer responds, '"They're crazy. [...] Have they seen the ruins? The radiation? The war? The anxiety? The hysteria?"' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 124). Interestingly enough, while the reader has seen the 'ruins', 'radiation', and 'war', they have not seen the 'anxiety' or 'hysteria'. Thus, the reader is allowed to see the external damage but not the internal repercussions, echoing earlier considerations of internal versus external survival.

Many of the time travellers are said to be '"Never satisfied. Always searching"' (Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', p. 124). As it turns out, 'it [is] not pleasant to live in times about which it [is] exciting to read.'[104] Betraying the self through a split between conscious and unconscious alongside the split between social condition and recognition of that condition creates a crisis through an internal struggle between knowledge and recognition. Sartre writes of man that 'the traditional psychoanalytic interpretation does not cause him to attain *consciousness* of what he is; it causes him to attain *knowledge* of what he is'.[105] Though Addyer has knowledge of his situation, he does not seem to fully grasp its psychological implications. Addyer's later admittance of the social condition shows he does recognise the state of the nation but wilfully ignores it and even ignores this ignorance by refusing to comment on it.

'Hobson's Choice' is clearly more concerned with nuclear war than the works previously discussed and the relegation of the discussion to the background, at least for the characters within the story, exemplifies the psychological numbing. As with 'Oddy and Id' and 'Of Time and Third Avenue', the argument continues that if the psychological workings of an individual are taken seriously and understood, then society could be better prepared to understand and cope with the concept. It also furthers the idea that individual psychology needs to be taken just as seriously as social psychology, arguing that a conformed whole could destroy an independent individual. Additionally, 'Hobson's Choice' further expands the understanding and use of the Cold War in Bester's work and pairs it with the recognition of the importance of psychology, which is continuously returned to in many of his later works.

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[104] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), p. 72.
[105] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 595.

Psychology and the unconscious, and the growing realisation that though out of our control it needs to be recognised and understood, mirrors the Cold War as something also ultimately out of the general public's control but which is a reality that still needs to be recognised and understood. A key fact regarding the end to 'Hobson's Choice' is that Bester does not indicate where and when Addyer decides to travel. It is ultimately not the point. The particular concept of escape is what matters; not where one goes, but rather that one leaves. As with Bester's other works, escape is a quick-fix, rather than a long-term solution. Just as mental escape is shown as a negative, physical escape is implied to be so as well. Physical escape therefore mirrors the mental escape seen through repression and psychological numbing and further speaks to a misunderstanding of the cause and effect of the psyche, thereby making 'Hobson's Choice' a cumulative effort of Bester's earlier 1950s' psychiatric works.

2. '[F]lashes of [the] real self': Bester's psychology of the stranger, 1953

I.

Though Senator McCarthy's career came to an end in 1954, by 1953 the nation appeared to be politically consumed with uncovering the Communistic influence supposedly rife within American society.[1] The stalemate in Korea had discredited ideas that mere containment of Communism would be sufficient, implying more drastic measures were needed.[2] However, Peter Filene writes that when the American public was surveyed with the question, '"What is your biggest worry these days, the thing that disturbs you the most?" Only 1 percent mentioned communism in the United States. The main worry for almost half of Americans in 1953 was the high cost of living.' The political consumption of Communists thus mirrors the focus on social consumption of material goods. Filene accounts for this disparity between the public's response and the politically perceived threat of Communism by claiming that 'there were two realms of experience, elite and ordinary, which coexisted but rarely intersected'.[3] This disconnect is most strongly represented in Bester's short story 'Disappearing Act' (*Star Science Fiction Stories No. 2*, 1953).[4] Bester continues earlier concerns of escape and war but proposes new areas of interest in social and political elitism. Through this, he examines the potential danger of over-reliance on experts, as briefly explored in *The Demolished Man* through the Esper society.[5]

'Disappearing Act' also introduces the concept of 'psychological strangeness', which can be found throughout Bester's work of 1953. Though the explorations into the stranger are more in-depth in other works of the year,

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[1] Ellen Schrecker, 'McCarthyism and the Red Scare', in *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, ed. by Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 371-84 (p. 377).
[2] Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), p. 22.
[3] Peter Filene, '"Cold War Culture" Doesn't Say it All', in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. by Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), pp. 156-74 (p. 160). For a further look at this, see George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public opinion, 1935-1971*, ed. by William P. Hansen, Fred L. Israel, and June Rephan, 3 vols (New York, NY: Random House, 1972), III.
[4] Alfred Bester, 'Disappearing Act', in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 3-21. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[5] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man*, intro. by Harry Harrison (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).

'Disappearing Act' introduces both the social identity of the stranger and the idea of experts, which later evolves into further discussions of the self as stranger and the place of the 'other' in society. Walter Shear claims that 'Post-World War II American literature presented a new focus on the individual, one which stressed the unknown, the strange and the confusing in the personal attempts to orient the self to the world'.[6] The stranger, in terms of Communism, primarily represents the ideological 'other'. Not only utilised as a reaction to the McCarthy era and the general Cold War atmosphere, it also represents a psychological inability to know one's self. As such, the discussion of the stranger often centres around ideas of the 'estranged' personality. The stranger as an unfamiliar individual is encountered not just through being unacquainted with someone's presence but through a differing mentality or psychology. A lack of knowledge regarding one's own psychology can create alienation between the external and internal self, thereby making the self a stranger even to oneself.

This self-estrangement can be seen in earlier works through characters such as Ben Reich and Oddy. 'Disappearing Act', however, explores the concept of the stranger through the idea of experts. By becoming engrossed in their chosen field, experts find those outside it to be strangers through an inability to relate, creating a disparity between elite and ordinary. The 'assumed need for experts' has resulted in parallel factions of American society between the technical/political elite and creative/emotional layman. 'Americans have been leading a double life […]; there has been the history of politics which is concrete, factual, practical and unbelievably dull […] and there is a subterranean river of untapped, ferocious, lonely and romantic desires.'[7] Encouraging ideas of the stranger between separate classes and social groups, this split relies on the inherent conflict caused through contrast and echoes the contrast between the id/superego and conscious/unconscious.

'Disappearing Act' utilises the 'War for the American Dream' to examine these separate factions of society, though the war ends up destroying the very aspects of society it was meant to be protecting. This destruction is discovered in the narrative when a poet is needed to uncover the secret of the disappearances from

[6] Walter Shear, *The Feeling of Being: Sensibility in Postwar American Fiction* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 84.
[7] C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 301; Thomas Hill Schaub, *American Fiction in the Cold War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 73-74.

Ward T and none can be found. The satiric emphasis on science over culture is clear, though it cannot be presumed that Bester was denouncing science in general.

In addition, the narrative echoes ideas of escape found throughout Bester's work. Often secondary to the main plot, it is nevertheless vitally important to the psychology of his characters and a comment on the atmosphere of the era. The ever-present threat of nuclear war and constant perceived state of paranoia and anxiety would have invited fantasies of a simpler life. Concerning the human desire for escape, Randall Bennett Woods comments that 'Humans had and would continue to find means of escape from the drudgery, danger of frustration, and anxieties of everyday life'.[8] Not only does this demonstrate the desire for escape but shows its psychology impetus. Escaping from a war-torn reality, previously explored in 'Hobson's Choice', induces such a strong desire to leave modern reality that people are forcing themselves to develop the ability to enter their own fantasies.[9] The ability of science fiction to literalise the metaphor aids Bester's approach to the subject and expands the metaphorical escape of reading fiction through the literal escape found within.

When it is discovered exactly what the patients in Ward T are achieving and where they are going, Scrim exclaims that '"*this* is [the] American dream"'. '"These people have discovered how to turn dreams into reality. […] They can stay there, live there, perhaps forever"' (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 20. Author's own emphasis). Removing the self from reality is said to be 'a new fantastic syndrome brought on by the new and fantastic horrors of war. As combat technique develops, the response of victims of this technique must also take new roads' (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 14). What the wars have been fought for has been inadvertently developed in the hospitals of those wars.

Though the escapist response is recognised as caused by the 'horrors of war', it is referred to as a response to a 'technique', which echoes General Carpenter's need for 'technical experts'. The destructive interplay between an obsession for experts and the protection of culture clarifies the discrepancy between the elite and the ordinary and demonstrates an ignorance of the effect this discrepancy can have. For an aspect of society to remain a stranger to those meant to be protecting that

[8] Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 130.
[9] Alfred Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 112-26.

aspect demonstrates the social break in national identity as the definition of 'American Dream' would seem to differ depending on which branch of society is considered. The classification of the self between psychological self and political self echoes this idea of estranged aspects, as seen in the story with the disparity between Scrim's personal approach and his expected political approach to the concept.

Scrim's attempt to be 'creative', by following his own concept of the 'American Dream', and therefore showing himself to be unlike the 'noncreative' experts, causes General Carpenter to imprison him. The General tells Scrim that he was '"convicted of enemy sympathizing and fellow-traveling"' (the diction here symbolic of Communist sympathisers) to which Scrim replies, '"I was convicted of believing in *my* American Dream [...]. Which is another way of saying I was jailed for having a mind of my own"' (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 17). Scrim's 'mind of his own' is a metaphor for independence but is also literal considering Bester's approach to psychology since the literal 'mind' of the self represents individuality and a non-conformed mentality. Scrim himself is an expert but his refusal to accept the so-called American Dream of the war labels him anti-American. With the war designed to protect people living the 'American Dream', Scrim's imprisonment becomes the embodiment of the ironic nature of destroying what is meant to be protected. Thus, Scrim's treatment is an individual reflection of the wider war. Despite the intention for non-creative experts to protect creativity, they are instead destroying it by attempting to create a collective monopoly on thought. The eventual realisation that the 'real' American Dream is achieved through self-fulfilled fantasy counteracts the prevailing sense of elitism and allows the individual American Dream to become real and achievable.

When General Carpenter is told the truth about the patients escaping into the past of their own imaginations, he is also informed that a poet would be the only individual capable of studying the phenomena; 'an artist who understands the creation of dreams'. The General is incredulous at the suggestion that a non-expert, non-scientific mind would be capable of doing what his experts could not. The irony is clear in Scrim's dialogue to the General, wherein he says, '"Don't you know what a poet is? You've been telling us for five years that this war is being fought to save the poets"' (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 20). Even in a nation full of experts, a non-expert (i.e. non-scientific) is the one needed to solve the phenomena which theoretically would be deemed a victory in the war. The ability to travel into one's

dreams is a precise representation of the American Dream which they have been fighting for. By only being solvable by an aspect of that Dream, it can be seen that science and culture, as two aspects of society, are both needed in order to maintain a stable and coherent whole, or else risk the destruction of one leading to the near uselessness of the other. Reflecting the need for personal reconciliation to resolve identity crises, this social consideration of the same situation demonstrates the similarities between social and private splits.

Carolyn Wendell describes 'Disappearing Act' as 'satire on the military mind and excessive reliance on specialization', which highlights the irony found throughout the story.[10] Bester describes the 'endless delay' and 'fruitless search' of trying to find a poet after General Carpenter had earlier declared, '"We must become a nation of experts,"' implying that experts as referred to here are specifically in the scientific fields (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', pp. 21, 4). Turning the nation into an elite set of experts all in the realm of scientific study, however, ruins the ability of those same people to be experts in cultural fields of study. This result unintentionally arises despite General Carpenter's declaration of the need to protect the 'Better Things of Life', which he determines are 'Music and Art and Poetry and Culture'. Their capitalisation shows them to be abstract concepts, rather than concrete areas of study, which establishes an initial disparity between protecting an idea and protecting the utilisation of that idea. However, to achieve the American Dream, General Carpenter states that one must have money, ambition, and ability (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 4). The Dream itself then becomes an elitist, capitalistic challenge as not all American citizens would be capable of meeting these requirements. Randall Bennett Woods writes that society had 'an obsession with consumption; and an insensitivity to the American underclass'.[11] That some may not be able to obtain the American Dream based on the restrictions General Carpenter has deemed it to have invites the question of whether this is not purposeful in order to exclude those deemed not worthy. The capitalistic nature would imply an inherent exclusion of those practicing different economic methods, specifically Communism.

The strong focus on the non-creative has sublimated elitism into something positive and required in order to aid the war effort. Sublimation is the process of enabling certain aspects of the self 'to find an outlet and use in other fields' while the

[10] Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), p. 48.
[11] Woods, p. 126.

original 'perilous' disposition is suppressed.[12] Sublimation is present not only in Bester's portrayal of elitism but in the war itself. In an attempt to make war socially acceptable, it was based on the protection of things which are themselves socially acceptable. War (or society's perceptions of it) has been modified through concepts that offer value (Beauty, Music, Art, Poetry, and Culture) in order to make it acceptable and possibly even desired. As a result, people come to psychologically believe in a perception of war that benefits society despite the obvious drawbacks. This contrast between the benefits and costs of war is evident in Freudian sublimation itself, for, as Freud writes, 'no sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed instinct's persisting tension.'[13] The sublimation of social aspects of war mirrors the sublimation of personal psychological aspects often seen in Bester's work. War is therefore the literal example of self-destruction through supposed protection. As explored elsewhere in Bester's work, attempts to prevent damage from abroad has inevitably created it domestically.

The war being for abstract concepts echoes the Cold War as a war of ideologies rather than force. General Carpenter declares that '"We are not fighting for ourselves, but for our Dreams […] which must not disappear from the face of the earth"'. The irony of this statement is clear by the end of the narrative, when Bester writes that General Carpenter does not understand the difficulty in finding a poet or 'why Bradley Scrim laughed and laughed and laughed at this final, fatal disappearance' ('Disappearing Act', pp. 4, 21). The use of the word 'fatal' indicates the death of the American Dream and of the 'Better Things in Life'. Though society may continue, its focus on experts has essentially caused it to lose half its identity. Ultimately, the cultural half of society has been destroyed, leaving the other half intact but incomplete. Echoing Bester's exploration of identity crises, this is a further example of American society reflecting and influencing the individual in terms of identity and psychological stability.

The 'War for the American Dream' is said to not be 'the last war or a war to end war' and so, unlike the consequences being taken for granted in 'Hobson's Choice', what is here taken for granted is the state of war itself (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 3). In revisiting this idea, Bester, intentionally or not, nearly

[12] Sigmund Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, intro. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 277-375 (p. 371).
[13] Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 218-68 (p. 249).

repeats himself, as *The Demolished Man* briefly considers the perpetuity of war in a similar way.[14] The perpetual state of war is indicative of mutually assured destruction as an attack by one side would not ensure a victory, but rather a further continuation of attacks.

A desire to 'win battles before they started' would prevent this but is also the thought process behind mutually assured destruction in the first place (Bester, 'Disappearing Act', p. 16). When it is revealed what is happening to the patients in Ward T, the General at first thinks it is time travel, which would certainly aid him in his endeavour to win the war before it started. This misunderstanding of how and why the patients escape shows General Carpenter's prioritisation of the military over individuals despite his public proclamations to be fighting for the good of society. Bester touches upon this by stating that 'General Carpenter asked for ten thousand U-Bombs. Ten thousand U-Bombs were delivered and dropped. The enemy also dropped ten thousand U-Bombs and destroyed most of America's cities' ('Disappearing Act', p. 4). This can be seen as analogous to the destruction of the American Dream and America's poets by demonstrating the underlying message that in preparing oneself to attack the enemy, one often hurts themselves in the process, as demonstrated by the loss of culture through the aggressive attempts to preserve it.

The contrast between fighting to protect 'the' American Dream and allowing individual American Dreams exemplifies a main theme in 'Disappearing Act' and underscores the General's misunderstanding between the cause of the war and the effect of the war. This disconnect between the general's ability to understand the tenuous nature between internal protection and external defence stems from his passion for war. This passion directly contrasts the lack of passion and emotional detachment from war seen in previous works, though each situation ultimately ends in personal destruction for the sake of society.[15] Though the characters themselves may not suffer from a split identity, it is clear that society does. The identity crises found in this particular story are less self-created and more unintentional, though that could easily speak to the insidious nature of social pressures. The national mentality is a larger (more public) example of the smaller (more personal) identity crises found in Bester's other works. The individual crises could be seen as representative of the

[14] In discussing the Bastion West Side, Bester mentions the destruction as resulting from 'the final war', which 'as usual, proved to be the next-to-the-final'. See Bester, *The Demolished Man*, p. 111.
[15] For this contrast, refer to 'Hobson's Choice' in chapter 1 and the importance of railways and social systems over the safety of individual inhabitants.

overall state of the nation as well as both contributing to the larger crisis and being created out of it. The government itself as a dual system split between what it espouses publically and its private workings has aiding in causing every citizen in Cold War America to become schizophrenic. As such, it becomes a positive feedback loop of the split self.

This interplay is discussed by Adam Piette in regards to the mirrored relationship between the nation and its citizens.

> In the Cold War, the Freudian split subject mimics the split political world because the superpowers treat their citizens, under nuclear and ideological compulsion, as infantilized neurotics in need of the authority of their parentally styled injunctions […] with the state playing the transferential role of split analyst to the citizen analysand.[16]

The split aspects of the national and the social indicate the estrangement between the citizens and their government which reflects the split between internal and external. Social acceptance of the same ideals the war is meant to defend against demonstrates a reworking of the national identity based on external influences.

'Disappearing Act' allows an understanding of the cause and effect between the self and society in terms of a wartime identity. However, by not focusing on those who have discovered a means of escape, Bester prevents the reader from sharing in this escape, therefore leaving the reader as equally unable to understand how to enter one's dreams as the General. This aligns the reader with the political and military aspect of the story, whether the reader wants to be or not, emphasising the position of individuals in a society forced to align themselves with experts or a war mentality through conformity.

This alignment demonstrates a feature of 'Disappearing Act' that differs from previous works, specifically 'Hobson's Choice'. Though both stories deal with war and its effect on society, they differ in how and why war is coped with. In 'Hobson's Choice', individuals have no choice but to live in a war torn society as, for them, war has already occurred. Though the response is not specific to Addyer's time, the

[16] Adam Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 53, 16.

solution for escaping psychological damage is to time travel. In 'Disappearing Act', individuals are told they must accept war since it is the only way to protect those aspects of society which are needed in order to ensure victory, causing hospital patients to travel into their own fantasies in order to escape.

These stories demonstrate Bester's interest in escape and war by showing psychological responses creating physical escape. However, in both cases, individuals have been manipulated into desiring escape through governmental approaches to war. Manipulation, despite the potential for mental/psychological damage, is deemed to be social comfortable. It ensures safety in conformity and creates the impression that you are doing what is socially 'correct'. William H. Whyte, Jr. notes that groups which coexist due to things such as shared location, do conform to others but that 'it is not *unwitting* conformity. The people know all about it'.[17] Conformity is undertaken as a way to belong and to accept others while being accepted yourself. As such, conformity, similar to sublimation, is a defence mechanism with which to cope with the devastating nature of war. It does not just allow manipulation to occur by deeming it more socially acceptable but also feeds back into the sublimation of the war itself thus allowing the war to continue in the first place.

Unlike many of Bester's other works, war is neither in the far-off background nor distant to ancient past. As per usual, however, the war is still not directly described or actually happening within the pages of the story. This assumption of nuclear war prioritises the consequences and reactions to the war rather than the event itself. It is doubtful the American Dream included being at war. However, it is through the course of war that the 'real' American Dream is discovered, thereby allowing the argument that, without war, this would not have happened. However, the American Dream that is realised is not the American Dream for which the war was fought, thereby creating a disparity between the socially perceived American Dream and the individual understanding of the concept. Again, the split between social and individual underlines the conforming nature of 'the' American Dream and the disallowance of the 'creative' nature which it is meant to be protecting. However, this version of the American Dream is an escape from modern America

[17] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 331. Author's own emphasis.

implying that the dream is 'escape' itself, especially from the ongoing war, something that was already achieved before the war to protect it ever started.

The nation as a wider reflection of personal identification indicates this escape to be an analogue of conscious repression of mental aspects, either to protect those aspects or as a result of the sublimation discussed earlier. Since the patients in Ward T are disappearing without public consent, the implication is of elements of the psyche (individuals) retreating into the unconscious with the intent of preventing a clash between them and the consciousness (society). This repression of aspects of society echoes individual repression of aspects of the self, both leading to unknowable and inaccessible attributes. The estranged self, through alienation and isolation, is not easily reconciled and the self as stranger is perpetuated through lack of understanding.

If individuals do not fit the national American identity, they are either forcibly repressed (e.g. Scrim) or unknowingly destroyed (e.g. poets). Public and personal identities are therefore shown to rely on each other. If harmonious, there would be no crisis but since having a collective national identity would inevitably be discordant with certain individual identities, the desire for a collective national identity could lead to individual identity crises in the first place. 'Disappearing Act' explores this clash by mirroring the estranged individual with an estranged society. Through this, the effect of experts and war on identity is examined and Bester is able to focus on the effects of a particular aspect of society. This narrow focus is further utilised in *Who He?* to explore social influences.[18]

II.

On June 22nd, 1950, *Counterattack* published a newsletter entitled 'Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television'. This newsletter gave a 'listing of entertainers deemed to be Communist Party members or to have like-minded opinions and associations', including authors such as Dashiell Hammett and Arthur Miller.[19] Reflecting earlier concerns of 'Red Channels', the fear of the

[18] Alfred Bester, *Who He?* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, [n.d.]). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[19] Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 7-8; Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents*, 2nd edn (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002), p. 244.

Communist 'other' and the impact it may have on the American public was, in 1953, narrowed down into specific aspects of this wider fear, indicating real, current pressures which Bester employed. Moving away from the focus on experts, *Who He?* (republished in 1956 as *The Rat Race*) focuses more on blacklisting and McCarthyism in the entertainment industry.[20] An inability to outwardly recognise ideological mentality creates an unknowable enemy and encourages unwarranted and often incorrect accusations of Communism. The line between friend and foe becomes ineffective and essentially meaningless as a clear definition beyond 'Communist' cannot be given. As a result, the 'other' becomes a perpetual stranger. This obsession with the ideology and psychology of strangers mirrors the importance Bester places on the psychology of the self and the elimination of the self as stranger.

The danger of the unknown enemy produces the main source of anxiety in *Who He?*. The threatening letters sent to protagonist Jordan (Jake) Lennox's variety show are unsigned and produce the fear that the stranger is someone known but made a stranger through lack of identification. The title of the novel plays into these questions of identity while connecting them to the entertainment industry. 'Who He?' is the name of the variety show Lennox works on and Martin Halliwell considers televised variety shows to enable a shying away from 'identity politics' and allow for 'an escapist pressure valve for cold war tensions'.[21] Lennox's ignorance regarding his split self causes his identity to be established as both a member of, and an opponent to, the television industry. Lennox's position in the industry causes the reader to make not only the obvious associations between Lennox and TV, but between the split self and TV. The novel's title reflects Lennox's own confusion as well as the confusion he instils in others through the multiple facets of his own identity. For example, many people in the novel know Lennox solely as Clarence Fox while others know him as Lefty Leftwich. These identities are strangers even to Lennox himself and the characters he meets while under these assumed identities remain strangers to any identity but that which they originally met.

Lennox needs to get blackout drunk before his Fox identity can emerge. This level of repression is indicative of Freudian ideas of repressed anxiety leading to a

[20] Alfred Bester, *The Rat Race* (New York, NY: Berkley Publishing, 1956).
[21] Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 163, 158.

self-destructive loss of personal freedom.[22] Lennox's multiple identities speaks not only to the pressures of the entertainment industry but to the danger of wearing a public mask for so long as to forget or repress one's true identity. When Lennox eventually perceives his multiple selves, he does not become wholly stable again until they are eliminated in favour of his real self; the identity classified under the name 'Jordan Lennox'. Lennox explains that the reason he gets along with Sam Cooper so well is that he does not fit into any particular niche but is capable of being a friend in all situations, implying that Cooper has successfully managed to adapt himself to any situation without allowing these adaptations to become split from his overall self. Lennox explains that '"Sam's a whole man [...] Most men are only part […] All split up. You have to put a lot together to get a whole"' (Bester, *Who He?*, pp. 131, 130). Unbeknownst to Lennox, his description of the split up man is directly relatable to his situation throughout the majority of the novel.

The threatening letters are revealed to be both written to, and written by, Lennox. His identity crisis has disabled him from recognising that he wrote them or to realise they are meant for him. The descriptions within the letters regarding the recipient are so incongruous to how Lennox perceives himself that he believes them to be descriptions of someone else. This is achieved not only through his split personality as the writer of the letters but through his inability to recognise himself as seen by others, which is presumably due to his repeated use of masks and portrayal of himself through alternate identities. When Lennox is told that the letters seem to indicate himself, he does not know 'what staggered him most . . . the realization that he was the man being threatened, or the picture of himself as other people saw him' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 126). This inability to recognise the self has been seen before with *The Demolished Man* and the inability to identify the enemy through an inability to identify the self is evident in both novels. Ben Reich's enemy, The Man with No Face, is both his enemy and his self, as is the writer of the letters both Lennox's enemy and his self.

This internal versus external struggle is evident not only in the men themselves but in their relation to society. Due to Lennox's attempts to be socially accepted, he has twisted his own identity into an unrecognisable enemy and set his subconscious against himself. Personal identity becomes reliant on the presence of

[22] Sigmund Freud, 'The Unconscious', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 142-83 (p. 158).

others, as a social comparison helps frame personal identity. Roseline Intrater states that this relation between identity and social setting comes from the human ability to reflect the world around itself and that mankind 'depends for his sense of existence on the way that others see him'.[23] This dependence is seen in Lennox's desire to belong by reflecting whichever social setting he is in. By writing the anonymous letters to himself, Lennox is utilising an external identity in order to reveal to himself his true nature. Through this, he is able to experience and understand the identity society has inadvertently forced upon him through his desire to not only reflect society but to internalise it.

Bester mirrors Lennox's personal battle with the writer of the threatening letters with the struggle against Communism. Perhaps most explicit is the idea of inadvertently waging war against oneself. The letters represent a conflict between 'an unknown killer and unknown victims' with Lennox incidentally operating on both sides of the conflict (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 80). The separation of killer and victims reflects the estrangement between 'them' and 'us' but both sides' association with 'unknown' implies the wider concept of battling an enemy which cannot be clearly identified.

This unknowability could lead to overzealous McCarthyism as ignorance of who was and was not a Communist often led to guilt by association. Simply operating in the same social circles as someone else could lead to a declaration of Communism against oneself, creating paranoia and anxiety. It also turned friends, neighbours, and colleagues into strangers as, without full knowledge of their internal self, one could not know how another's presence might affect one's own standing in society. Bester writes that 'such was the hysteria of the times that mere accusation was enough to make the world draw aside the hem of its garment in terror and hound the victim out of the business' (*Who He?*, p. 192). Bester satirises this fear by claiming that once one is accused, even if later deemed not guilty, they will still remain so in the eyes of the public, thereby showing not only the haphazard nature of the accusations but demonstrating the irrational paranoia of the general public.

It can be considered that, by the time Bester wrote *Who He?*, three years after the advent of McCarthyism, he, and much of society, were seeing it as reactionary and deserving of critique. On November 16th, 1953, President Truman gave a

[23] Roseline Intrater, *An Eye for an "I": Attrition of the Self in the Existential Novel* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 34.

televised address claiming that 'McCarthyism is the corruption of truth […]. It is the use of the Big Lie and the unfounded accusation against any citizen in the name of Americanism and security'.[24] President Truman's speech corresponds with *Who He?*'s publication demonstrating Bester's use of current events to espouse similar ideas in his writing. No longer worthy of paranoid obedience, these concepts have become safe to ridicule without automatically being deemed Communistic for doing so.

Bester's characters often refer to blacklisting as a joke or as so overused as to not be a serious threat. When it is revealed that Lennox has been blacklisted, it is referred to as 'a laugh', especially because the use of a pen name allows him to remain in the business, demonstrating the identity split afforded by naming and the easy acquisition of an identity as a stranger. The threat of public ruination through accusations of Communism is referred to as 'That Communist routine', with the word 'routine' likening it to the gimmicks Lennox uses for his variety show (Bester, *Who He?*, pp. 134, 310).

This association with television gives McCarthyism an unrealistic quality and aligns it with the technology behind television by emphasising their similarities in terms of public influence and control. As the presence of television grew, so too did its potential for shaping and informing national and personal identity. The advent of television and its 'homogenized' programming allowed 'stereotyped depictions of a shadowy but lethal anti-American threat' which were 'broadcast so ceaselessly [...] [as] to define the public image of American life'.[25] The association between the two concepts symbolises them as equally destructive not only to society but to the personal struggle between internal and external influence. This is especially true in the early 1950s, as it gave the public televised coverage of politics, nuclear weaponry, war, and McCarthyism. As Eric Burns writes, 'never before had so many people been able to watch the same entertainment in the same circumstances at the same time.'[26] David Halberstam notes that 'In 1952 *TV Guide* magazine was founded. The frozen TV dinner was introduced in 1954, and by 1956 Americans for

[24] Doherty, pp. 14-15.
[25] Susan J. Douglas, 'Mass Media: From 1945 to the Present', in *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, pp. 78-95 (p. 81); Christopher Newfield, 'Cold War and Culture War', in *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*, ed. by Paul Lauter (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 72-95 (pp. 76, 81).
[26] Eric Burns, *Invasion of the Mind Snatchers: Television's Conquest of America in the Fifties* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010), p. 36.

the first time were spending more hours watching their sets than working for pay.'[27] By 1959, 90% of homes had a TV set and Martin Halliwell writes that 'as a cultural artefact it was virtually impossible to avoid'.[28] With so many people's rapt attention, it became easy to impose, whether intentionally or not, a form of domestic conformity.

The programming available to the mass public, according to Susan J. Douglas, consisted mainly of 'overly cautious, homogenized, white, upper-middle-class renditions of American life'.[29] This uniformity enabled individuals to define themselves according to the narrow perspectives seen on TV. Conforming to the images seen on television or portrayed by neighbours was possibly more than many individuals were capable of and the attempt to present a particular mask to society did more harm than good. By being 'imprisoned in brotherhood', individuals find themselves in conflict between their 'moral duty' to the group and their own internal urges. William H. Whyte, Jr. sees this conflict as a continuous state between individuals and society that has 'always involved dilemma' and always will.[30] As such, television did not only encourage 'Americanness', it also hindered it in individuals unable to replicate exactly what was expected of them.

Some descriptions of Lennox subtly reference the melding of public identity with television. At one point, Lennox's consciousness is described as having 'ignited, herringboned, then sprang into life' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 13). This occurs when a reference to Lennox's TV show causes him to remember his authentic self and suppress his alternate identity, Clarence Fox. A connection is thus indicated between activating Lennox's true identity and turning on a television set. Further, 'herringbone' refers to an interference pattern seen on contemporary TV sets implying the interference TV can have on identity and more directly referring to the interference it plays in this scene between Lennox's multiple identities.[31]

As a result of the connection between McCarthyism and the entertainment industry, the American identity is also portrayed in specific contrast to the Russian or Communist identity. This is achieved through 'Demonization of the Soviets, and

[27] Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou, *America since 1945: The American Moment* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), p. 61.
[28] Halliwell, p. 147.
[29] Douglas, p. 81.
[30] Whyte Jr., pp. 365, 400.
[31] Keith Jack and Vladimir Tsatsoulin, 'herringbone pattern', in *Dictionary of Video and Television Technology* (2002), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-054583-7.50013-6>.

other CP-led regimes' by presenting worse-case scenarios of Soviet behaviour in comparison to American core values.[32] When his gimmick writers are coming up with jokes for the variety show, Mig Mason repeatedly responds with '"Diggy's a wholesome American boy. He wouldn't make fun of"' marriage or disease (Bester, *Who He?*, pp. 104, 105). Americans as 'wholesome' not only reflects conformity by playing off ideas of 'whole' (an indication of mass society), but also sets the American identity against that of the supposedly unwholesome Communist identity.

Ideas of the 'wholesome American' are continued in the advertising presented on Lennox's show. The New Year's Day broadcast of the show has a single commercial break wherein 'Mode Shoes would [...] wish[] a Happy New Year to the American Way of Life' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 139). The capitalisation of 'American Way of Life' presents it as an official concept; something sanctioned by television and meant to be aspired to by viewers. The focus on consumerism through television advertisements created identities formed around 'leisure, spending, and instant gratification' as a move away from previous concepts of 'hard work, thrift, and deferred gratification'.[33] This perhaps explains the zeal for McCarthyism which promised quick satisfaction in discovering and punishing the enemy. Examining the effect of media through both its medium and content, Marshall McLuhan claimed in 1964 that ads were akin to brainwashing, as they create an illusion of awareness and individualism but are actually hypnotizing an entire community.[34]

Advertising was thus a powerful tool that could be used to reinforce what John Wilson calls the 'ideological commitment' that is 'national identity in the US'.[35] The American national identity, as part of the American Way of Life, contrasts that identity with the ideological commitment held by Communists, thereby reinforcing American national identity as a war strategy rather than a natural progression of society. When Lennox orders a Moscow Mule at a bar, he feels it necessary to explain that he did not order it 'because he was sympathetic to the Soviet cause, but because he admired the copper mugs' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 242). Desiring materialism over ideology evokes the larger conflict between Capitalism and Communism and the need to show others which side one identifies with.

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[32] Hixson, p. xiii.
[33] Douglas, pp. 81, 86.
[34] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 227, 112.
[35] John Wilson, 'Sport', in *The United States in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jeremy Mitchell and Richard Maidment (Kent: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), pp. 233-57 (p. 236).

By negating any association with Communism, one automatically aligns themselves with the American national identity. The focus on identity indicates the importance of labels and the abstract nature of the 'other'.

> From its very beginning, the struggle between the Soviet Union and the Western powers was intimately connected to sets of images of oneself and others – images that reflected one's place in society and in the world. […] large groups of people came to identify themselves with the cause of one or the other of the superpowers.[36]

Conforming to the 'wholesome' American identity protects one not only from the government but also from the hysteria and anxiety of fellow Americans. M. Keith Booker comments that 1950s' paranoia was concerned with 'invasion and occupation by a subtle and invisible Other'.[37] Concern over the 'other' is predicated on the self being in contrast with this 'other' and defined by the label one gives oneself; either 'Soviet' or 'Western'. That there could be a third possibility of an individually created personal identity separate from mass society is not considered.

Mass society's influence can be seen throughout the novel but Lennox's attendance at social gatherings best express the effect it can have on personal identity and specifically on creating and encouraging Lennox's split identity. The disparity between Lennox's conscious selves is best shown at Alice McVeagh's party. The party is described as a 'Square party', thereby immediately separating 'Squares' from non-Squares. This split between classes is described by explaining that 'there's an invisible barrier between us and them' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 37). This social separation echoes wider dislike for the 'other' and emphasises the inherent split between different aspects of society.

Lennox, similar to much of 1950's society, wishes to be what others want him to be, but the multitude of external desires on Lennox's self means that he can never satisfy all and thus hardly satisfies even himself. In an effort to fit in, Lennox

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[36] Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad, 'Cultures and Mindsets', in *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, ed. by Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 412-44 (p. 412).
[37] M. Keith Booker, *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 130.

is assuming an identity that he perceives is the 'correct' one for him. Lennox's behaviour at the party echoes the initial description of him in the novel.

> Jake was a hell of a rowdy guy; full of laughter and boisterous energy, yearning for ribald friends and a burning girl he could love and marry and riot in bed with. He was not aware of this. He believed in the conscious image of what he wanted to be. And while the lusty passions within him fought to overturn and destroy the world he had made for himself, his conscious mind was fighting desperately to hold it together.
>
> (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 9)

Separation of the self into known and unknown is reminiscent of wider concerns of Communism and domestic considerations of external influence on identity. Lennox's identity crisis demonstrates the split between the personally-conceived self and a socially-conceived self and is the precipitating factor for his social anxiety. Lennox's unawareness of his other selves, and his position as stranger in his own life, means he attempts to genuinely prove to himself and others that he is what he portrays himself to be.

Lennox's yearning for a sense of belonging is what Arthur Koestler refers to as a 'psychological urge'.[38] Instead of being accepted for who he is, however, Lennox aims to be accepted by becoming similar enough to others to no longer be considered the 'other'. Lennox's desire to belong reflects society in general when Bester writes, 'How badly all of us want to belong on somebody else's terms' (*Who He?*, p. 39). For belonging on one's own terms to no longer be considered a viable social option indicates how far conformity has been incorporated into social relationships, as Irving Howe comments that 'we are all conformists to one or another degree'.[39] However, in attempting to impress the Squares at the party, Lennox simultaneously ruins his reputation with Gabby. Lennox stood, 'keeping his face wooden and unrecognizable, trying to belong on Alice McVeagh's terms, and destroying himself before Gabby Valentine' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 45). Gabby's

[38] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), p. 242.
[39] Irving Howe, 'This Age of Conformity', in *The Partisan Review Anthology*, ed. by William Philips and Philip Rahv (New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1962), pp. 145-64 (p. 154).

dislike for Lennox after he reveals his true self is a result of there being 'a stranger in his body'. The stranger inside Lennox is said to have killed his inner 'flame' and 'was trampling on the embers in icy fury', reflecting Lennox's violence towards himself as depicted in the letters (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 47). The fact that Lennox is the only main character intentionally utilising masks, and then subsequently is the only character shown to have an identity crisis, underlines the dangers of prioritising social identity over personal identity.

A similar exploration of social identity takes place when Gabby and Lennox arrive at The Midnight Sun, which holds miscegenous barn dances (Bester, *Who He?*, 172). Miscegenation is defined as being theoretically advantageous to society.[40] Bester refers to this racial mingling as being 'elite', indicating that miscegenation could undermine anxiety regarding the 'other'. Skin colour is more difficult to suppress than a facet of one's mentality, as it is a physical aspect, but the sentiment remains the same. Described as having the feel of a slave auction, however, the place is paired with a description of Gabby which enumerates her pleasing features (*Who He?*, pp. 172, 173). Imprisoning something pleasing indicates a desire to protect that which is enjoyable. However, doing so at the expense of what is being protected is similar to the conflict between protecting culture and waging war in 'Disappearing Act'.

Lennox's statement that 'We're intruding', indicates a self-awareness regarding the differences between himself and others that contrasts his earlier attempts to blend in (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 174). Rather than putting on a mask which he thinks will garner him acceptance, Lennox instead realises that he is in fact different from the others. This intrusion is most likely more easily felt by Lennox because he feels uncomfortable without the safety his masks would normally have afforded him in social situations. Unable to adapt himself to his situation means having to confront others with his true self since the main obstacle to him passing in this subset of society is his skin colour, which is an unchangeable aspect of his identity.

A fight begins when Lennox attempts to evade a transvestite's unwanted advances and Roy Audibon makes racist comments towards Eugene K. Norman.

[40] 'miscegenation, n.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015) <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/119267?redirectedFrom=miscegenation#eid> [accessed 9 July 2015].

Their locally contained fight quickly spreads to the entire room as 'that spark of violence ignited all the violent hostilities in The Midnight Sun'. This spread of violence is similar to the idea behind mutually assured destruction and the fight is essentially the release of social tension. Bester writes that 'The band began riffing the National Anthem. Nobody who could hear it paid any attention' (*Who He?*, p. 177). It could be surmised that the intent was to remind the crowd of their national identity and so return to that 'wholesome' state discussed earlier, thereby ending the violence. The men claim that they were fighting out of self-defence and to protect Gabby, to which Gabby replies that '"There's no excuse for fighting . . . ever!"' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 179). Protecting someone by fighting parallels 'Disappearing Act' and ridicules labelling the amassment of weapons in order to avoid war as self-defence.

In discussing Lennox's fight with the transvestite, Gabby assumes the transvestite is homosexual and therefore 'sick'. Implying that he suffers a psychological disorder, she further states that '"You shouldn't hate them"' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 179). Encouraging acceptance of the 'other' reflects Gabby's denunciation of the fighting by showing her understanding that differences are not necessarily a danger. Gabby's comparison of the transvestite to the girl overdosing in the restroom pushes both identities (i.e. homosexual and drug user) to the fringes of society. Similar to skin colour, the transvestite still has an external signifier of their identity due to their clothing but the ambiguity over how they mentally perceive their own identity reflects unresolved social anxieties of the internal 'other'. A complex set of images when read from a modern standpoint, this ambiguity reflects contemporary associations between Communists and homosexuals since both 'were difficult to spot'.[41] By subverting external perceptions, the depiction of the transvestite reflects the differences between self-identification and social perception by challenging assumptions of identity.

Bester frames this personal fight with the same sense of hysteria that seemed to socially underscore much of the Cold War. When they first arrive at The Midnight Sun, the manager is described as having 'a nervous, sprightly air, and his smile was almost hysterical'. Upon leaving after the fight, Lennox attributes their cheerful air

[41] Cynthia J. Fuchs, 'Split Screens: Framing and Passing in *Pillow Talk*', in *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons*, ed. by Joel Foreman (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), pp. 224-51 (p. 229).

to ‘hysteria’ (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 173, 180). By mirroring this fight with the larger Cold War and then framing the incident with references to hysteria, Bester associatively frames the Cold War in hysteria as well, underlining the prevailing psychological anxiety of the decade by portraying it on a smaller, personal scale.

At both the party and The Midnight Sun, there are repeated references to stereotypes and of specific places in society being meant for specific types of people. Bester describes the guests at the McVeagh party as ‘Pleasant young men Cooper had known at Loomis and Princeton, and the jolly old gentlemen they would in time become’ (*Who He?*, p. 38). This description implies a sense of defined social placement that has nothing to do with individuality but rather a pre-determined social identity based on education, similar to Lennox’s focus on social identity based on occupation. These stereotypes are furthered at Ye Baroque Saloon as the people there are reminiscent of the partygoers: ‘Crop-haired boys with hornshell glasses who would become the Audibons and Bordens of the next decade . . . Striking young girls who would become their wives and mistresses’ (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 181) These similarities indicate physical repetition regardless of location, thereby implying conformity across all aspects of society. Alan Nadel comments that during the Cold War conformity was not an aspect of any particular part of society but a ‘pervasive performance’ throughout.[42]

The whole of Manhattan (The Rock) is said to suffer from individual social wars, which can be seen to mirror the wider Cold War. Lennox and Audibon’s fight over Gabby prompts the narrator to state: ‘They were hating for reasons I didn’t know and probably they didn’t know either; but that wouldn’t make any difference, not on The Rock where you killed first and went to the head-shrinker later’ (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 86). The idea of killing first and going to a psychologist afterwards reflects the reactionary nature of McCarthyism and the Cold War. The phrase also indicates the notion of psychology as a remedy after the fact rather than something capable of prophylactic uses. Many texts in the 1950s, according to William Darby, were short-sighted in regards to the usefulness of psychology and were ‘suspicious about [the] discipline’.[43] This suspiciousness in mainstream literature is reflected in

[42] Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 4.
[43] William Darby, *Necessary Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), p. 263.

Bester's prose, making his narrative an examination of contemporary views of psychology.

In referring to individuals on The Rock, Bester writes that 'A man may declare war on you because you're a threat to his job, or merely because you're a symbol of a threat to his precarious stability'. Declaring war on 'a symbol of a threat' reflects the Cold War being declared on an ideology. The narrator further comments that 'I'm constantly walking a tightrope over hysteria' (Bester, *Who He?*, pp. 4, 3). The tightrope imagery indicates this 'precarious stability' and the inclusion of hysteria as a particular threat reiterates a general concern of the novel regarding the mental imbalance of the estranged self. Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou consider the fiction of the 1950s to 'describe a world of immanent crisis in which […] characters are suspended over an abyss'.[44] Repeated imagery of suspension emphasises the fragile state of the self and its precarious existence within society. A person's job as a factor of their stability is recalled later in the novel through considerations regarding the importance of career or social placement in identification and social acceptance as 'Insecurity over social status […] has been mixed with insecurity over one's very identity'.[45] Social status therefore equals social acceptance and the importance of career implies considerations of consumerist capabilities based on income or social class.

Life on The Rock thus mirrors American life as a whole through similar anxieties and responses. Lennox refers to the struggle between his show and the unknown writer of the threatening letters as a 'rotten war' and the sentiment is easily translatable to the preoccupation with atomic war and the Soviet Union. Lennox explains that he would rather avoid a fight but Oliver Stacy tells him that fights can never be avoided because '"It's all a fight, and the only way to keep from losing is to win"' (Bester, *Who He?*, pp. 92, 121). Both Lennox and Stacy's comments echo the Cold War in opposite ways. Stacy's comment echoes the concept of amassing nuclear weapons as a preventative measure as well as McCarthyism. Winning ideologically or psychologically is equal to winning physically assuming all-out war does not become an actuality. However, Lennox's wish to avoid fighting completely

[44] Levine and Papasotiriou, p. 76.
[45] Richard Hofstadter, 'The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt – 1954', in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966), pp. 41-65 (p. 56).

equally recalls the preventative measure of mutually assured destruction, which theoretically ensured an avoidance of violence.

The threat of war in the 1950s had additional anxiety over previous wars due to the introduction of nuclear weapons. '[B]efore the thermonuclear bomb, man had to live with the idea of his death as an individual; from now onward, mankind has to live with the idea of its death as a species.'[46] Not only does this consideration demonstrate the reach of nuclear anxiety, it also exemplifies the move from individual considerations to social ones. Gabby tells Lennox that 'if you attack and destroy others, you end up destroying yourself' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 136). This statement could mean either physically or psychologically and is applicable to the Cold War as a whole. Lennox's split personality may result from attempts to mask himself as an acceptable member of society but the result is that one of his personalities ends up vowing to destroy the other. Since the two identities are part of the same man, destroying one means destroying the other and ultimately destroying the self as a whole.

Cooper chastises Lennox for misidentifying the enemy and picking fights with everyone except the person who deserves it: himself. '"You're so busy fighting the invisible villain you don't realize you're him [...]. You're the only villain in this piece"' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 97). Hints like this throughout the novel regarding Lennox's relationship with the letters are reminiscent of the codebook in *The Demolished Man*, which gives the reader an opportunity to become less estranged from the characters even while those characters remain estranged from themselves. Cooper goes on to tell Lennox that he is 'the one building it into a crisis', physically and psychologically, which reflects Lennox's encouragement of his own crisis through his social anxieties (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 98). Lennox's acceptance of other's perceptions has led to the crisis becoming a fully realised split self. Mutually assured destruction is here reflected in Bester's views on how excessive 'Americanness' can both help (by fulfilling a need to belong) and hinder (by damaging one's sense of self).

Cooper expands on his comment by telling Lennox that he should stop trying to blend in with society because society operates under the misconception that there are 'Good Guys' and 'Bad Guys', which could easily be read as 'us' and 'them'.

[46] Koestler, p. 322.

This separation is shown to be incorrect when Cooper continues by saying, '"But we know we're all Good Guys and Bad Guys inside ourselves."' This is further indicated when Bester writes that '[we're] two people in one. Everybody is, more or less' (*Who He?*, pp. 98, 306). Lennox is literally both the 'Good Guy' and the 'Bad Guy' and it underscores the idea that an individual may not always be aware of, or in control of, their subconscious self.

Lennox's realisation that the letters were a result of his dislike for himself echoes the hatred he felt when he believed Cooper had been the one writing them, thereby indicating a psychological transference of emotion from himself to an external source. Lennox explains, '"It's like there were two of me . . . and one didn't like the other"' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 297). Freudian transference requires a renunciation of the real object of the emotion thus explaining Lennox's dislike and denial of his true self which caused the emergence of his alternate selves.[47] The influence and affect one person can have on others can be seen as a microcosmic example of the influence an entire nation is capable of having over its citizens. Cooper's suicide as a result of anxiety over the threats against him when Lennox believes him to be the writer of the letters mirrors the wider Cold War as a violent result of psychological considerations. An inability to withstand social perceptions of self has led to personal destruction, which can be related to the inability to reconcile different ideologies within the Cold War and violent estrangement between the two.

The split between self-perception and perception by others is expanded on by Lennox when he explains, '"Communists . . . Tcha! They're our decoys. We use them for red herrings to conceal us. The real us. We are the danger."' The question to Lennox of whether he can 'name names' is a clear reference to McCarthyism and the 'other'. However, in naming names, Lennox says, '"But above all, Lennox. Lennox is the man"' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 250). This focus on the self reconfigures the earlier dialogue into a personal statement rather than a national one by implying that the focus on national politics has overshadowed personal identity politics. Not knowing your enemy combined with not knowing yourself creates a separation between whom you actually are and whom you perceive yourself to be in relation to your supposed enemy. Perceiving yourself to be threatened by Communism may

[47] Freud, 'The Unconscious', p. 167.

become more of a reality than whether you actually are being threatened, as this exchange reveals.

How others perceive Lennox is encountered each time he attempts to socially portray himself a certain way. Individuals are only able to perceive Lennox as he shows himself to them and this variation is exposed through Lennox's multiple identities and the names associated with each. After exiting The Midnight Sun, Lennox invites the Killer to his show and tells him to ask for Jordan Lennox. Lennox tells him it is '"A television show called "Who He?"' to which the Killer, only knowing Lennox by the name Fox, asks him, '"Who's Jordan Lennox?"' (Bester, *Who He?*, p. 180). The pairing of these two phrases emphasises the similarity of the questions. Gabby furthers the comparison by replying that Jordan Lennox is his 'pen name'. The abundance of pseudonyms and multiple personalities with which Lennox identifies has caused his identities to become fluid and unstable.

At the end of the novel, Gabby and Lennox, having recognised and understood his split self, have moved to the countryside and are living a happier, quieter life. Lennox has begun scoffing at 'Squares' rather than desperately trying to join them. This change indicates that his identity crisis has presumably been resolved or at least the contributing factor of social assimilation has been removed. The separation from city life would seem to have finalised the psychological healing that was begun by Lennox realising his crisis. R. D. Laing writes that the main way to preserve one's identity from being socially absorbed is through isolation.[48] However, the isolation which this requires questions whether split identities are only caused by association with others or can only be solved by leaving society. While the implication is there, it cannot be assumed that Bester was advocating a withdrawal from society in order to remain psychologically healthy, especially as later works dealing with this issue argue against it. Rather, it accentuates the influence that social interactions and mass society can have on an individual and only by demonstrating a removal of these influences can their impact be fully recognised.

The association with Bester's own experiences in the entertainment industry could account for *Who He?*'s mainstream style as the real experiences which influenced it required little extrapolation in order to explore the themes covered within. Bester explains that, 'When I'm most at grips with dramatic reality, I have

[48] R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), p. 44.

the least interest in science fiction.'[49] Therefore, *Who He?* being based on Bester's own experience in TV would have encouraged him to break from sf and deal with his own reality in a more realistic way. Bester's disgust with TV led to the writing of *Who He?*, which he refers to as a 'corrosive novel', though he recognises that it was perhaps not as corrosive as he intended.[50] However, in reviewing the novel, C. V. Terry wrote that *Who He?* explores the dilemma of whether TV is 'a blessing or a torture' and refers to the novel as 'corrosive, frequently strident but almost always engrossing'.[51] Bester's attempts to show the danger of uniform compliance to what Christopher Newfield considers television's 'restrictive or coercive Cold War portraits of national life and identity' was not a singular reaction based on Bester's own feelings towards, and experiences within, the television industry but rather a common thread in the fiction of the time.[52]

Similar explorations of television and the dangers of advertising are utilised in other sf works of the time, including *The Space Merchants* (1952).[53] Depicting a future where consumerism has completely encompassed American society, the novel creates social divides between 'producers' and 'consumers', with advertising agencies on the verge of replacing the government. The 'American way of life' determined by 'the general acceptance […] of a relatively small set of narratives by a relatively large portion of the population', encouraged the virtue of advertised conformity and is demonstrated throughout the novel.[54] In addition, Ray Bradbury's short story, 'The Pedestrian' (1951), describes a man who gets sent to the Psychiatric Center for Research on Regressive Tendencies for taking a walk instead of watching television like the rest of society.[55] Though both these works warn of the dangerous potentialities associated with TV, and utilise them in discussions of identity, Bester's

[49] Bester, 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man', p. 417.
[50] Bester, 'My Affair', in *Hell's Cartographers*, p. 74.
[51] C.V. Terry, 'The TV Jitterers; "WHO HE?" By Alfred Bester', *The New York Times*, 1 November 1953, book review section, p. BR4.
[52] Newfield, p. 83.
[53] Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, *The Space Merchants* (London: Gollancz, 2003); Pohl's work in advertising would have informed his writing in a similar manner to how working in TV informed Bester's. See Frederik Pohl, *The Way the Future Was: A Memoir* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1978).
[54] Nadel, p. 4.
[55] Ray Bradbury, 'The Pedestrian', in *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971) pp. 25-30; *Fahrenheit 451* takes this further with televisions designed to give viewers interactive roles in the programming. See Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2013), pp. 17-18.

in-depth consideration of the split self as a possible result focuses on the personal rather than the social.

Though useful for discussing contemporary issues of conformity and social anxiety, Bester did not return to the mainstream novel until late in the decade, coinciding with his emergence as a non-fiction writer for *Holiday*. Bester's self-identification with both the narrator and Lennox indicates the novel directly relied on Bester's own experience while his sf similarly focuses on issues of identity and the Cold War but lacks direct life experience, thus requiring further extrapolation while allowing greater freedom of thematic exploration. The fact that a number of authors chose to explore the undeniable pull of mass communication technology and the ways in which it can define a new sense of 'Americanness' shows a recognition of its importance and how one medium is capable of exploring both the positives and negatives of another. *Who He?* then stands as an insider's literary reflection on television and an exploration of its ability to both encourage and hinder the inevitable link between national television and national identity.

III.

Published in the May-June issue of *Fantastic*, 'The Roller Coaster' is based on the premise that time travellers are using contemporary society as an 'amusement park' by focusing on those with psychological issues and inducing mental breakdowns as a form of entertainment.[56] It is fairly easy for the travellers, David and Freyda, to find individuals with psychological issues powerful enough for them to take advantage of, indicating the abundance of disorders within contemporary society.

A scene between David and a prostitute ends with him walking away when she fails to give in to her neurosis, implying that some people are capable of controlling themselves or are less influenced by external stimuli. Considering Bester's other works, one can assume that external influence is a difficult thing to resist and that it takes a strong, stable self to do so. However, this stable self usually implies a healthy mental state, which is already known to be damaged in the victims chosen by the time travellers. David complains that 'The whole trouble with these

[56] Alfred Bester, 'The Roller Coaster', in *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 238-48 (p. 247). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.

neurotics is that you can't depend on them' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 239). Since neurotics are considered unstable, assumptions or predictions can hardly be made regarding their behaviour. However, the expectations of time travellers regarding contemporary anxieties is based on assumptions rather than psychology, meaning they lack as much understanding of how their victims function as do the victims themselves.

When David finds Gandry, the man Freyda had been working on, committing suicide, he tells Freyda that one cannot depend on potential suicides. David comments that 'it was about time [Freyda] got sense enough to lay off the psychotics' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 241). This appears contradictory to the very reason they have travelled to this time but the diction indicates differences in what type of disorder is considered entertaining. Freud differentiates between the two by considering 'psychosis' to be a withdrawal 'from a piece of reality' while a neurosis is created through an abundance of 'influence of reality'.[57] Thus, 'neurotic' is more in keeping with the atmosphere of the 1950s by relating to the overall sense of anxiety and paranoia and the estrangement of the self from this external reality. To discontinue relying on psychotics for entertainment implies an understanding that they are not as easily induced to break down due to their disorder not resulting from their social climate, which is more universal and thus more easily exploited.

When Eddie Bacon describes his encounter with Freyda to David, he explains how he killed her and her subsequent disappearance from their apartment. When both the police and psychologists insist that Bacon was alone in the room, he later tells Freyda, '"That put you into my imagination and *that* put *me* into the psycho ward for a week"' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 246. Author's own emphasis). That Freyda could be 'put' into Bacon's imagination reflects the influence that external factors can have on internal mentality. The external becoming internal reflects the anxiety which the victims within the story suffer from as an internal reaction to an external factor. For both the victims and Bacon, this internal factor becomes external again in the outward presentation of this anxiety and, in Bacon's case, his stay in a psych ward.

As with Bester's other works, this presents a positive feedback loop of external/internal influences and the cyclical nature of the interplay between society

[57] Sigmund Freud, 'The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 568-72 (p. 568).

and self. Bacon describes the incident with Freyda as 'a war from the start [...] and it ended up with a killing' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 244). For war to end with 'a killing' would seem redundant but since the Cold War was still cold, this would have been a feared eventuality. Nuclear war would have annihilated much of the population, with the potential for many survivors, like Bacon, to be traumatised to the point of hospitalisation. Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk write that 'survivors [of nuclear war] would be experiencing not only the most extreme forms of individual trauma imaginable but an equally severe form of collective trauma stemming from a rupture of the patterns of social existence'.[58] Not only would the consequences be both individual and social, the response mirrors the divide and interplay between these two spheres of influence. Bacon's stay in a mental institution after his 'war' with Freyda is thus a small-scale example of this post-traumatic anxiety.

The differing attention paid to names and relationships shows the time travellers' view of contemporary citizens as objects of enjoyment rather than individuals. When David is with the prostitute, he comments that '(I'd forgotten her name)', calling her 'lover' instead (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 238). The insignificance of names in favour of personal ambitions signifies the meaningless of the relationship and prioritises self-gratification over social responsibility. This approach is similar to that of Gully Foyle's in *The Stars My Destination* before his transformation at the end of the novel.[59] The lack of a relationship with the prostitute encourages her position as stranger. It can be assumed that the stranger is favoured by the time traveller since it requires no personal ties with the individual or the time period. The issue of *Fantastic* which published 'The Roller Coaster' also contained a small bio note written by Bester. This bio note, however, is fairly flippant, as Bester includes details such as the fact that he has learned to eat with a fork.[60] The humorous take on this short biography implies an assumption on Bester's part that his readers are already aware of his identity. Additionally, it demonstrates a disregard for new readers and whether they gain a truthful account of Bester's

[58] Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk, *Indefensible Weapons: The Political and Psychological Case Against Nuclearism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1982), p. 278.
[59] Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, ed. by Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).
[60] Alfred Bester, 'They Write…', *Fantastic*, vol. 2, no. 3, May-June 1953, p. 2.

identity. This approach to self-identity therefore mirrors that of the time travellers as they similarly care little for naming or biographical information.

Alternatively, Bacon exhibits the opposite response of David to names in his encounter with Freyda. He tells David, 'Her name was Freyda. F-R-E-Y-D-A. Like Freya, Goddess of Spring.' When asked for her surname, he responds, 'I don't know. I never found out.' Not only does Bacon remember her name clearly, he makes a point of spelling it and associating her with the goddess, indicating a level of attention to detail which is lost on David. Bacon goes on to say that 'Maybe she didn't have any last name because she was imaginary like they keep telling me' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 243). The connection between name as identifier and the physical entity which the name indicates is shown to be more of a consideration with the contemporary characters than those from the future. The use of individuals as entertainment encourages this dislocation and the disinterest in others as actual selves demonstrates an assumption by the time travellers that their selves are somehow more real or superior to those in the time periods they visit.

Bacon compares their time travelling to contemporary society's use of theme parks for momentary thrills. He explains that 'prehistoric memories' activated by basic thrills that 'appeal[] to the Stone Age flesh in all of us' are 'Basic entertainment', using a dinosaur themed roller coaster to illustrate his point (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 242). Similar to the time travellers, the roller coaster enables a temporary escape from reality. Bacon explains the comparison between this ride and the time travellers' use of their time period.

> "Passion. Emotion. Screams and shrieks. Loving and hating and tearing and killing. That's their roller coaster. That's how they get their kicks. It must be forgotten up there in the future, like we've forgotten how it is to be chased by a dinosaur."
>
> (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 247)

Using another time period to find enjoyment reflects the time travel therapy explored in 'Hobson's Choice' and the use of time to fulfil an escape fantasy, as in 'Disappearing Act'. Bacon explains that Freyda escaped death at his hands by going 'out through time' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 246). Though each story gives different reasons for, and manners of, travel, they all rely on escaping a current

reality for one deemed more favourable. Though Freyda's escape is temporary and her return voluntary, this ability epitomises the desires of those in the other two works.

The reference to the period as the Stone Age for time travellers implies a future civilization advanced enough to find contemporary time 'primitive stuff' (Bester, 'Roller Coaster', p. 242). A focus on the primitive echoes research into psychological warfare during the 1950s and Ron Theodore Robin's assertion that 'The exploitation of socially subversive primal drives was the main, if not the only, task of efficient psychological warfare'.[61] The connection between primal drives and psychological warfare reflects David and Freyda's reason for time traveling as well as Bacon's war metaphor regarding Freyda in connection with his presumed psychological breakdown. Martha A. Bartter argues that if man is socially influenced to be 'civilized' then we must 'assume that "primitive man" lurks beneath the socialized exterior' and that man is capable of returning to this savage state when under stress.[62] David and Freyda rely on a return to this savage state when they induce stressful situations on individuals in order to aggravate their neuroses. The association between the primitive self and the id is examined by Freud in his explanation of the id as the seat of instinct and base satisfaction/passion.[63] In contrast with the superego as the root of morality, David and Freyda represent the id through their desire for primitive satisfaction at the cost of morality due to their disinterest in the mental health of those they encounter. Thus, the interest in primal drives allows an escape from moral responsibility and the self/ego.

Though only briefly touching upon identity and war, their inclusion in this short story indicates they are important enough to discuss even when they are not the main aspect of a work. The exploration of the significance of names on the level of personal involvement in a relationship echoes the recurring theme of external versus internal by examining the assumption that those without internal selves are undeserving of being externally distinguishable. 'The Roller Coaster' relies on a lack of familiarity as the time travellers need to remain strangers in order to avoid detection by contemporary society. Neither David nor Freyda are given surnames,

[61] Ron Theodore Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 96.
[62] Martha A. Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), p. 140.
[63] Sigmund Freud, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 7-65 (p. 21); Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 439-78 (p. 450).

therefore encouraging this sense of the stranger, and their existence in a time period other than their own creates estrangement between themselves and the society they currently inhabit. The stranger typically becomes familiar through identification, placing an importance on identity not just in the personal sense, but in enabling social relationships and public perceptions. By continuing to pair a desire for escape with ideas of the stranger, Bester examines the estranged split self as the ultimate form of escape and its connection with neuroses and anxiety.

IV.

Connections between escapism and ideas of the stranger is continued in 'Star Light, Star Bright' (*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, July 1953).[64] In this story, however, rather than individuals escaping from reality, they are forced out in order to make it better for an individual still living there. Stuart Buchanan, a ten year old boy, is revealed to have a genius for wishing, which, unbeknownst to him, can physically remove individuals, paperwork, and even memories, thus allowing him to escape anyone he deems threatening. Unlike 'Disappearing Act', rather than escaping into a fantasy of his own making, Buchanan alters his own reality at the expense of others. In this way, Buchanan's form of escape is the most detrimental as it affects unwilling individuals, unlike previous stories, where individuals only altered their own position in reality.

The reality where Buchanan sends the protagonist, and presumably any number of other individuals, is described at the end of the story.

> It was a straight white road cleaving infinitely through blackness, stretching onward and onward into forever; a dreary, lonely, endless road leading away and away and away. Down that road Warbeck plodded, an astonished automaton, unable to speak, unable to stop, unable to think in the timeless infinity. Onward and onward he walked into a long way away, unable to turn back. Ahead of him he

[64] Alfred Bester, 'Star Light, Star Bright', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 38-55. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.

> saw the minute specks of figures trapped on that one-way road forever.
>
> (Bester, 'Star Light', p. 54)

The repetition of 'forever' and 'endless' coupled with an inability to turn back indicates a perpetual escape for Buchanan. Unlike in previous works, these individuals are not able to return to their own time. The repetition of 'away' further emphasises that this reality is designed to take people away from Buchanan, as he essentially remains motionless, making his escape a pushing away rather than a running away.

It should be noted that the paragraphs wherein it is described who else is on the infinite road with Warbeck and the immobilizing effect on everything except walking were originally not part of the narrative. They are the result of a lost struggle with Anthony Boucher over specifics of the narrative. 'He wanted [Bester] to wrap up the story by showing precisely what happened to the victims. [Bester] wanted to slough it.'[65] Though not damaging to the story, the paragraphs give the reader extra information of which not even Buchanan is aware. Thus, an aspect of Buchanan which is estranged from himself is not estranged from the reader, allowing a sense of familiarity with the character not normally allowed by Bester. 'Hobson's Choice' does not reveal where Addyer travels to nor does 'Disappearing Act' reveal how the patients' escape is accomplished, thereby making 'Star Light, Star Bright' the only work to reveal the end result of escape.

Buchanan is not the only child genius with special powers in the story. Warbeck quips that the sudden surge in genius talent could be a result of atomic fallout (Bester, 'Star Light', p. 48). It is unclear whether this implies nuclear war in the context of the story or is a reference to atomic testing in the contemporary United States, but the casual mention of nuclear weaponry indicates a continuing unawareness of the effects of radiation. Considering President Eisenhower's insistence on 'keeping the public "confused" about […] radiation hazards', this ignorance within the public is understandable.[66] In addition, the public were not 'encouraged to take an active role in their own future, when it included the

[65] Alfred Bester, 'Star Light, Star Bright: Introduction', in *Starlight: The Great Short Fiction of Alfred Bester* (Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday, 1976), pp. 276-77 (p. 277).
[66] Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 188.

development and testing of atomic weapons'. The danger of Buchanan's talent is the danger of any new science, which is its potential for destructive outcomes regardless of intent. Martha A. Bartter considers science fiction to be prone to exaggeration when it comes to 'scientific hubris' and 'the supposed willingness of scientists to act without considering the consequences'.[67] Warbeck fulfils this stereotypical scientist role in the story by focusing on financial/militaristic concerns rather than Buchanan's well-being.

Warbeck wants to find Buchanan in order to convince his parents to allow use of Buchanan's power. Warbeck explains, '"What would the army pay for a disintegration beam? What would an element transmuter be worth? If we could manufacture living robots how rich would we get? If we could teleport how powerful would we be?"' (Bester, 'Star Light', p. 49). The concern is not for the individual with the talent but for what could be gained by exploiting it. In January 1953, the comic book *Atomic Attack* published an issue which began, 'What strange and fantastic weapons are being created in our government laboratories at this very moment? What still stranger and even more fantastic weapons will be used in the war of tomorrow?'[68] This fascination with weapons that could be utilised in future wars is an indication of public interest in military technology which can also be seen in other publications. In 1951, *Collier's* published an issue titled 'Preview of the War We Do Not Want', which examined how the war would be fought and won and the consequences of the aftermath.[69] The desire to understand future wars and the technology used goes beyond just curiosity. As the *Collier's* title indicates, it is a defence strategy to plan for the worst case scenarios. The children's abilities within 'Star Light, Star Bright' can thus be seen as science fictional approaches to futuristic military technology and the effect it can have on future generations, for, if the children were found and utilised, they would no longer be children, but weapons. Similar to Philip K. Dick's 'Second Variety' (1953), in which the enemy is represented by small boys with teddy bears, the assumption that everything, including people, can be weaponised enhances fear of the 'other' and the increased mechanisation of humanity.[70]

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[67] Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero*, p. 98.
[68] [unknown], *Atomic Attack*, vol. 1, no. 5, January 1953, p. 1.
[69] [Louis Ruppel, ed.], *Collier's Weekly*, 27 October 1951.
[70] Philip K. Dick, 'Second Variety', *Space Science Fiction*, vol. 1, no. 6, May 1953, pp. 102-45.

Though the exploration of an identity crisis is not present in this work, the story does make use of naming as a substantial indicator of identity or the lack thereof. From this, it further examines the perceptions of others based on introductions or self-presentation. During the course of his investigation for Stuart Buchanan, Warbeck initially introduces himself as Mr. Foster. He next introduces himself as Mr. Davis, causing his name to become written as Mr. Foster/Davis. Later on, he introduces himself as Mr. Hook, making his name Mr. Foster/Davis/Hook (Bester, 'Star Light', pp. 39, 40). Warbeck's new identities do not erase his previous identities and at the core of this fluidity is his true self. Roseline Intrater questions how individuals can 'choose new identities if, in a confrontation, they must return to their original ones, however tenuous those may have been? Is identity truly fluid if there is some vestige of a stable identity, however fragile, to which return is possible?'.[71] Warbeck's real name, and thus his real self, is revealed after he is kidnapped. Thus, true to Intrater's question, it is through confrontation that Warbeck reverts to his original self.

Warbeck is kidnapped by Herod and Davenport because they believe that he is attempting to cut in on their inheritance racket, 'The Heirs of Buchanan Caper' since both groups are tracking individuals with the Buchanan surname. Warbeck tells them that he '"need[s] to locate one particular Buchanan"' (Bester, 'Star Light', pp. 42, 45). Though all individuals with the surname Buchanan share the name, they do not share the same identity, and it emphasises the difficulty of finding an individual within the masses. Arthur Mann refers to this problem of the reconciliation of unity and diversity as a 'universal problem' which constitutes the 'problem of the One and the Many'.[72] Dichotomised between these two concepts, the self becomes both unique and estranged within the group dynamic. Each Buchanan maintains their own unique identity but finds themselves subsumed into the group by this very same identity.

Warbeck's mutable identity results not just from the abstract concept of naming but because those whom Warbeck meets are only able to identify him based on the information he provides them. Thus, even though he has introduced himself, he remains a stranger as a result of the false name, which only creates a false sense

[71] Intrater, p. 118.
[72] Arthur Mann, *The One and the Many: Reflections on the American Identity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. xi.

of familiarity. This is similar to the con men's scam as they utilise multiple instances of the same name to convince strangers that they belong to the family in the scam, thus creating familiarity where there is none. When Warbeck's full name is revealed as Marion Perkin Warbeck, his habit of going by false names becomes more significant than the names themselves. Warbeck says that he 'never admit[s] the Marion to strangers' thus placing a barrier between his full identity and society (Bester, 'Star Light', p. 42). Without the Marion, he becomes simply Perkin Warbeck; a name he shares with a historical imposter to the English throne who also appropriated a different name and identity for themselves.[73] Thus, a connection is indicated between Warbeck's identity and his actions, which makes his external self at least partially reflect his naming.

Though 'Star Light, Star Bright' does not deal as heavily with psychological concerns as other works, the story does include other contemporary concerns. When Warbeck is kidnapped by Herod and Davenport, he responds to his treatment by saying, '"What the hell is this? Russia?"' (Bester, 'Star Light', p. 42). The question indicates at least an underlying sense of the contemporary atmosphere and perceived 'otherness' of the Soviet Union. Though identity crises are not directly discussed, naming and mutability of identity are seen as factors in such crises elsewhere in Bester's work. The use of naming in order to raise questions of strangeness and familiarity encourages a social reading of the self as stranger due to the ease of presenting a false self when individuals do not know enough about the internal workings of another to realise the deceit.

What 'Star Light, Star Bright' does that is dissimilar to other works written so far is to utilise these themes while discussing escape in a different manner than previously used. The reversal of the ending in which the protagonist is removed in order to be escaped from, rather than the protagonist escaping from something, demonstrates the changing use of an escapist reality. The change from allowing individuals to remove themselves from dangers such as war to allowing individuals to remove such dangers from their reality indicates a move towards taking control of the problem, rather than running away, though the response is still portrayed as

[73] James Gairdner, *History of the Life and Reign of Richard the Third, to which is added The Story of Perkin Warbeck from original documents* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010), pp. 333-90.

immature. This reversal initiates an advancement away from neutral acceptance of anxiety and paranoia in favour of removing the sources of these conditions.

V.

'Time is the Traitor' (*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, September 1953) similarly treats the idea of the stranger differently than previous works.[74] 'Time is the Traitor' introduces the idea that the once familiar can become strange. Those once identified and known can become strangers through a change in identification, either in themselves or others. That even a well-known person can end up being a stranger is touched upon in Lennox and Gabby's relationship in *Who He?* but the focus there is on the self as stranger. In 'Time is the Traitor', however, John Strapp and Sima Morgan are relatively sure of themselves but not of each other.

The story revolves around Strapp's efforts to be reunited with Sima after her death by searching for her replacement in the form of her doppelgänger. However, too much time has passed and when Strapp ultimately finds the real Sima, in the form of her clone, they are unable to recognise one another, both physically and mentally. Strapp leaves convinced that the woman he saw was not Sima at all, while Sima physically recognises Strapp, but cannot reconcile the changes she sees within him with the person she remembers.

> The girl screamed and struggled, terrified by those strange eyes that were alien, by the harsh hands that were alien, by the alien compulsions of the creature who was once her Johnny Strapp but was now aching years of change apart from her.
>
> (Bester, 'Time', p. 157)

The repetition of the word 'alien' and use of the word 'creature' emphasises the extent to which their relationship has developed into that of strangers. Strapp and Sima have essentially become one another's 'other'. Though outwardly identifiable, they are not mentally, continuing ideas of the internal versus external while

[74] Alfred Bester, 'Time is the Traitor', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 136-58. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.

reinforcing fears of Communists hidden in plain sight due to the incongruous nature between appearance and thought.

This sense of 'other' is also attributable to the fact that Sima both is and is not the woman Strapp is looking for. The Sima which Strapp encounters is a clone who has had Sima's body and psyche recreated in a lab. As previously examined through Reich's demolition, this further raises questions of whether the destruction of an individual's psyche and its subsequent rebuilding would result in the same individual or not. The questions of identity examined within 'Time is the Traitor' require a conceptualisation of identity that includes the subconscious. Sima's clone is promised to be 95% the same as the original Sima. Frankie Alceste questions whether it makes a difference that it is not 100%, to which he is told, '"It is a most remarkable individual who is aware of more than eighty percent of the total characteristics of another person. Above ninety percent is unheard of"' (Bester, 'Time', p. 150). Thus, Strapp's failure to recognise Sima as herself and not just a doppelgänger goes beyond just her being a clone. His failure to recognise her is because she is not 100% herself, which indicates a level of identification that went beyond the average familiarity found between individuals.

What the cloning does account for is Sima's inability to recognise Strapp. Though theoretically she should, Sima exclaims that '"My Johnny's young"' showing that, while Strapp has aged, Sima's psyche remains at the point at which she died (Bester, 'Time', p. 157). By continuing to think of Strapp as he was eleven years ago, Sima is unable to reconcile the aged Strapp with the one she expected to be reunited with. As a result, this temporal disparity essentially creates an identity crisis within Sima's expectation of Strapp's identity. Thus, the effect of the passage of time on causing strangeness is explored alongside cloning and identity. Freud discusses the passage of time and its effect on the self by considering the difference between the id and ego. Freud claims that, due to the ego's proximity to external reality, it both recognises and creates the concept of time. The id, in contrast, due to its position in the unconscious, has no 'recognition of the passage of time, and […] no alteration in its mental processes is produced by the passage of time'.[75] Sima's clone is unaware of the passage of time and so her ego is incongruent with its external reality as it perceives time and her place in it differently to what it is in

[75] Sigmund Freud, 'The Dissection of the Psychical Personality', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 484-504 (pp. 501, 499).

actuality. Strapp's ego has adjusted to this passage of time making him unrecognisable to Sima and Sima outdated and thus inauthentic to him. The static nature of the id, however, means that Sima is unconsciously still herself, but Strapp's inability to access her unconscious means he is unable to use this as an indication of authenticity.

This interaction also points to a progression of identity that has rendered names useless for identification. Though John Strapp may still identify himself as such and therefore associate his name with his identity, Sima is unable to reconcile his name with his current identity, due to her association of the name with the version of the man she used to know. The lovers will never be able to recognise one another, as their relationship is based on an idea of self that no longer exists. Strapp is described as 'not so much eleven years older as eleven years other than the man whose memory he was fighting to fulfill' and that, in asking himself whether the woman is in fact Sima, 'the change within him answered, "No[...]. Move on and search. You'll find her someday – the girl you lost"' (Bester, 'Time', p. 157). Strapp and Sima are no longer searching for each other but rather for their memories' versions of each other. The change as one of otherness rather than age indicates that mental identity is what has altered, rather than physical identity. These changes in personality may not be readily detected by those who have daily interaction with an individual, but the drastic change eleven years can make can render an individual a stranger even to those familiar with their past self.

Names as inaccurate for identification is shown through their tendency to be misleading as they cannot be presumed to be irrevocably tied to a particular personality. Strapp's appearance at Buxton Biotics details the arrival of himself and his retinue: there came 'a thin, fortyish clerk in a baggy suit […] After him came a magnificent creature, tall, majestic, clean-shaven but of infinite wisdom and compassion'. People are said to imagine Strapp as a 'giant bearded creature of infinite wisdom and compassion' and though he arrives clean-shaven, he is said to be 'no disappointment' (Bester, 'Time', p. 138). However, the dishevelled clerk is actually Strapp and the relatively more impressive looking man is a decoy. The name itself furthers this deception as 'strapping' indicates a strong and robust individual,

which contrasts with the clerk.[76] Strapp gives people an individual who matches exactly what they expect him to be because he knows people would never associate the name with someone like him. Pre-conceived notions of the self has hindered identification causing the unknown to remain so despite assumptions of familiarity.

Strapp has a similar identity crisis over a man named Kruger. Inside of tying the name to a single identity, he ties a single identity to all instances of the name. This creates a fixation on the name, regardless of individual implications, similar to McCarthyism and the disregard for the actual guilt or innocence of an individual. When the clerk later leaves the plant, he shoots and kills a man, whom, upon having his identification checked, is revealed to be William F. Kruger. Aldous Fisher explains that '"He's got a Kruger fixation. He meets a man named Kruger – any man named Kruger. […] He murders"' (Bester, 'Time', p. 140). Reacting purely to the name and not to the individual indicates Strapp's compulsive association of name and identity, despite the potential disparity between the two.

When it is suggested he be taken to a psychoanalyst, Fisher responds that Strapp is unique and psychoanalysis could destroy this feature. Strapp's uniqueness is his ability to make Decisions, a talent akin to a sixth sense, and explains, '"It's an unconscious process, and for all we know it may be linked up with the same abnormality that makes him murder Krugers. If we get rid of one, we may destroy the other"' (Bester, 'Time', p. 141). The assumption that Strapp's abnormality gives him his identity, rather than being one aspect of his self, implies that if he were 'cured', he would no longer be Strapp. Strapp's compulsions are an aspect of his self and, according to Daniel Dennett, removing any 'sort-of-self' would be impossible without destroying the self it is attached to.[77] As such, Strapp suffers from an identity crisis in a sense not usually seen within Bester's work. Rather than a psychological condition leading to a split self, a psychological condition is the only thing keeping Strapp's conscious and unconscious in harmony.

External influences on identity are shown to not just include the social or political but uncontrollable abstracts such as time. These unescapable influences demonstrate the danger of insisting a particular identification is static simply because the psyche occupies the same body. Dennett considers the self to be an abstraction

[76] 'strapping, adj.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/191290?rskey=jwY7V1&result=3&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 9 July 2015].
[77] Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 422.

that is not a concrete aspect of a particular organism or brain.[78] Therefore, location does not confirm the self. Strapp's obsession with all Krugers and not any specific one mirrors this consideration. This fluid nature of the stranger within the story demonstrates the mutability of identity and its ability to both alienate and make familiar. Strapp does not murder individuals but the idea of an individual, therefore making the idea of the stranger inconsequential as there is no requirement for familiarity.

VI.

Bester's last work to be published in 1953 was an essay titled 'The Trematode: A Critique of Modern Science Fiction' (*The Best Science Fiction Stories: 1953*, September, 1953).[79] A treatise against the immaturity and over-simplification Bester believed was present in sf, the essay discusses aspects Bester considering missing from the genre. Bester begins by lamenting sf's past and being hopeful for its future, saying that he believes he speaks for everyone in saying this, 'for we are all alike in our sins and our hopes' ('Trematode', p. 11). This is reminiscent of *The Demolished Man* prologue, wherein he introduces the idea that 'We're all alike inside our minds'.[80] Bester's use of psychology aims to rectify what he claims is its lack in the average sf text, which is incapable of 'handl[ing] human beings'. Bester writes that he believes the future of sf lies in dealing with 'genuine human beings in genuine human conflicts' ('Trematode', pp. 13, 21). For this reason, Bester praises Theodore Sturgeon for not being 'preoccupied with the gadgetry of science; he prefers to extrapolate the human being rather than the test tube'.[81] Reliance on science fiction as a means of escapism and nothing else is what Bester claims has led to this disinterest in human behaviour. Bester considers sf to be 'guilty of the naïveté of the child', thereby aligning pure escapism with immaturity ('Trematode', p. 12). This can be seen in 'Star Light, Star Bright', as Stuart Buchanan does the relatively

[78] Dennett, p. 420.
[79] Alfred Bester, 'The Trematode: A Critique of Modern Science Fiction', in *The Best Science-Fiction Stories: 1953*, ed. by Everett F. Bleiler and T.E. Dikty (New York, NY: Frederick Fell, 1953), pp. 11-22. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[80] Alfred Bester, '*The Demolished Man*: The Deleted Prologue', in *Redemolished*, pp. 529-41 (p. 536).
[81] Wendell, p. 13.

childish thing of wishing his problems away and remaining ignorant of the consequences of his actions.

Bester claims that most sf is unable to handle scientific disciplines professionally and takes refuge in simplification. Thus, psychology becomes misused due to a preference to use stereotypes instead. Bester claims mediocre sf and the non-serious use of the human individual to be a result of this fear of complexity. Bester refers to this fear as 'a childish refusal to accept the complexity of reality and the complex response demanded by reality' ('Trematode', pp. 12, 13, 14). In order to thoroughly examine the human character, it is implied the psyche must be included as an aspect of that character and explored appropriately. This approach to character was not completely unknown in sf and magazines such as *Galaxy* and *Fantasy and Science Fiction* endeavoured to promote sf as a serious literature. However, this transition from genre fiction to mainstream caused many authors to leave the field, Bester included, which is indicated by his retreat from the genre near the end of the 1950s.[82]

Desiring to present characters as real individuals is contrasted with the ability to accurately portray technology. Bester applauds sf for its ability to keep up with, and fully utilise, modern technology but that this obsession with science often comes at the expense of those who use the science. 'Science-fiction can tell the reader the melting point of a solid on Mercury, the freezing point of a gas on Neptune, the explosion point of a nova in Andromeda, but it has no idea of the melting point, the freezing point and the explosion point of a human being' (Bester, 'Trematode', p. 17-18). Bester claims that this leads to the preponderance of things such as robots or AI and their treatment as members of society. What these scientific advancements lack is human psychology, making them better and more easily written as they have no psyche in the first place and so cannot claim to be missing any aspect of their characterisation.

Bester refers to human characters as 'mannikins in a store window' used to demonstrate the science or gimmick of the story without actually having any involvement (Bester, 'Trematode', p. 17). Bester writes that human factors must be the object of all fiction and that readers must be able to identify with the characters in a story. Further indicating this, J. G. Ballard considers writers of sf to have a

[82] Rob Latham, 'Fiction, 1950-1963', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 80-89 (pp. 83, 87-88).

tendency to reflect the internal landscape of their own mind in their writing and the reader must interpret the ideas presented as such. This representation of 'inner space' within fiction makes the work an 'external equivalent[] of the inner world of the psyche'.[83] Implicit in Bester's assumptions of the self-reflective nature of fiction is that when contemporary society comes to understand and realise the extent of their own psychology, they will then look for similar approaches in their fiction. In his Nobel Prize address of 1950, William Faulkner remarked that 'the problem of the human heart in conflict with itself' is enough for good writing, indicating that an examination of the self can be used for decent literature. Faulkner's claim that his contemporaries have forgotten this can be seen as an urging for authors to explore the self and encourage the same in their readers.[84]

Bester has encouraged this approach in his fiction by utilising Freudian psychology and psychoanalysis despite contemporary disbelief that there could be aspects of the mind over which an individual has no control. This approach to psychology follows Bester's belief that no matter how far into the future a story is set, man 'will be the same complex creature, suffering in the same basic conflicts, fighting, loving, hating, searching for the answers to himself and his place in the universe' ('Trematode', p. 21). Bester believes that sf, in envisioning the future, must allow man to be able to accurately see himself existing in that future. The use of psychology would not only allow for deeper characterisation but propose the ways in which man may react to that future psychologically and therefore enable an extrapolation of the mental as well as the physical. In March 1953, Bester wrote a letter to *Startling Stories*, which sums up what he considers a good sf text. The novel he mentions is Philip José Farmer's *The Lovers*, which he calls 'one of the most remarkable science-fiction stories I've ever read […] really unique, certainly a giant step away from Typhoid Mary and her Merry Men'.[85] Farmer has achieved what

[83] J. G. Ballard, 'Time, Memory and Inner Space', in *The Drowned World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2012), About the Book, pp. 10-13 (p. 12).
[84] Boyer, p. 251. Boyer is quoting William Faulkner, 'William Faulkner's Speech of Acceptance upon the Award of the Nobel Prize for Literature', in *The Faulkner Reader: Selections From the Works of William Faulkner*, ed. by Malcolm Cowley (New York, NY: Random House, 1954), pp. 3-4 (p. 3).
[85] Alfred Bester, 'The Scholarly Type', *Startling Stories*, vol. 29, no. 2, March 1953, pp. 134-35 (pp. 134-35). By 'Typhoid Mary', Bester is referring to sf pulp fiction covers with scantily clad women being rescued from a monster by the hero.

Bester perceives to be quality science fiction; something supported by Farmer's later Hugo win for the same work.[86]

Though the majority of the essay laments this perceived immature lack of human focus in contemporary sf, Bester does touch upon other factors. Bester considers much of contemporary science fiction to offer little hope or sense of a future and the focus on dangers and overwhelming responsibilities has caused this 'universal gloom' ('Trematode', p. 14). Paul Boyer writes that authors attributed this depressive atmosphere to the nuclear age and the existence of nuclear bombs. Boyer believes Mary McCarthy considered the bomb to offer 'yet another depressing reminder of the ubiquitous reach and deadening spiritual effect of the modern technocratic order'.[87] Science is again seen to weigh heavily on the psychological state of the individual, demonstrating that while science is an important focus, its effect on the self cannot be ignored. By combating negative psychological thoughts within contemporary society, the use of the bomb could perhaps be avoided or the future viewed more favourably. However, Bartter believes that 'all postholocaust fiction tacitly controls the result of atomic war by positing the survival of human beings and some form of culture'.[88] Bester contributes to this conception of atomic holocaust by not allowing nuclear war to prevent the physical continuation of society and individuals within his work, though the potential death of the psychological self is examined.

The use of atomic disintegration in order to demonstrate a ghastly end for humanity is one example Bester cites, which differs from his own usage. Though he does not shy away from war or nuclear weapons, which are found in nearly every piece of his work throughout the 1950s, they are never the point or directly plot related. As Bartter writes in regards to nuclear war in science fiction, 'The situation seems inevitable, unalterable, and self-explanatory.' Therefore, 'This may explain why so few nuclear fictions bother to show who is bombing whom and why.'[89] Nuclear war is never the point at which Bester ends a story, allowing a continuation after the bomb is dropped in which man survives and perseveres. The consequences of war and nuclear fallout may be present in his works but these physical

[86] John Clute and David Pringle, 'Farmer, Philip José', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. by John Clute and others (25 June 2015)
<http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/farmer_philip_jose> [accessed 10 July 2015].
[87] Boyer, p. 251.
[88] Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero*, p. 150.
[89] Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero*, p. 131.

consequences are not main plot points. Though the escape in 'Disappearing Act' is a direct result of the ongoing war and Addyer wishes to leave his time due to nuclear destruction, the focus is not the physical war but the psychological response. Paul Boyer writes that 'Fear of the Russians had driven fear of the bomb into the deeper recesses of consciousness'.[90] This replacement of one fear with another demonstrates why Bester references atomic war but does not always focus on it and why the fear of identifying as Russian or otherwise becomes the greater concern.

Bester's works could be said to argue that there is hope for the future as long as mankind evades the pitfalls of the modern day by avoiding conformity, understanding psychology, or not taking war for granted. Bester claims his hope for the future is not often reflected in his contemporary sf. He believes 'This gloomy satisfaction with assured disaster and this terror of the unknown are not the result of mature understanding' ('Trematode', p. 14). In contrast to this, however, is Judith Merrill's *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950) which takes a humanistic approach to a post-nuclear holocaust society and shows the hope for rebuild.[91]

In addition, anxiety over the 'terror of the unknown' is present in much of the sf which Bester refers to as suffering from a 'conspiracy complex' wherein 'We harbor secret enemies in our bosom' ('Trematode', p. 15). As well as the psychological self as internal enemy, it can be inferred that Bester is referring to Communists and the oversimplification of the 'us' versus 'them' scenario. Bester's criticism of McCarthyism and farcical treatment of blacklisting and the dangers of Communism within his works results from what he considered the overuse of the stereotypical enemy within the entertainment industry. He refers to their usage as 'commercial' within radio, TV, and film based on the knowledge that such things will sell due to the current social atmosphere. However, Bester claims that sf is no better and has 'helped confuse the world picture as recklessly as any propagandist, politician or tabloid newspaper' ('Trematode', p. 17). Paul Boyer comments that 'the nation's atomic fears were manipulated and exacerbated by the media', which explains the influence of mass media on paranoid fears of the time.[92] Though Bester utilises similar themes and situations, he attempts to add a human component to them. The mainstream literary world's increasing attraction to sf meant that an

[90] Boyer, p. 339.
[91] Judith Merril, *Shadow on the Hearth* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1953).
[92] Boyer, p. 65.

increased number of readers would be subjected to what Bester considered escapist literature lacking a human basis. The dangers of this can be seen in 'Hobson's Choice' when it is explained that Addyer left the only time for him, implying that escapism seems pleasant but could be the wrong response to a situation.

'The Trematode' could be seen as the expository summation of Bester's previous works, underscoring what he believes should be present in sf and why he uses such themes the way he does. By creating metaphors about the wider world through mirroring individual struggle with social conflict, Bester is able to reflect human reality within his narratives. The estranged mentality Bester depicts in social reality reflects the estrangement between what he believes sf is capable of and what it currently espouses. The escapes explored in his works signify attempts to remove the self from a negatively influential world, indicating Bester's attempts to have psychology and sf as a whole move away from contemporary restraints in order to accurately and realistically portray the internal self and its place in the world.

3. ‘Explain myself to me’: Psychological self-awareness, 1954-1955

I.

In examining what Bester aims to achieve in his works, it is useful to consider contemporary responses to his fiction. Reviews of *The Demolished Man* demonstrate how his approach to psychology and identity was being received.[1] (Edward) Groff Conklin wrote a review of the novel for *Galaxy Science Fiction* (September 1953 (February 1954 [UK])).[2] Conklin is regarded as being ‘of considerable importance in legitimizing American Genre SF for the book markets’, which had only recently penetrated the medium post-World War II.[3] Rob Latham explains that ‘works originally published in genre magazines […] became bestsellers when released in book form’. Sf masterpieces were now available outside of the journals they were originally published in, giving readers ‘access not only to current work but also to the cream of the pulp archive’. In addition, ‘the range of formal techniques available to writers also expanded since a freestanding book was, at least potentially, a more aesthetically autonomous work than a novel or story cycle written with the exigencies of serialization in mind.’[4] This move into book format is mentioned by Conklin in regards to the serialisation of *The Demolished Man* prior to its publication as a book, which he comments is a similar progression followed by many recent high-quality texts.

The increase of magazine publications turned into novels advances previous considerations of sf’s move towards mainstream exposure.

> [John W.] Campbell had proven that a serious-minded alternative to pulp plots and styles could prosper in the genre, and the new digests of the 1950s, especially *Galaxy* and *F&SF*, set out to show that the

[1] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man*, intro. by Harry Harrison (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).
[2] Groff Conklin, ‘Review: *The Demolished Man*’, *Galaxy Science Fiction*, vol. 3, no. 11, February 1954, pp. 100-01.
[3] Malcolm Edwards and John Clute, ‘Conklin, Groff’, in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. by John Clute and others (22 Oct. 2014) < http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/conklin_groff> [accessed 29 October 2014].
[4] Rob Latham, ‘Fiction, 1950-1963’, in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 80-89 (pp. 80, 81).

> field could now accommodate ironic satire, allusive wordplay, and ambitious character studies.[5]

Psychology inherently relies on an exploration of the human, in-depth emotional and mental considerations, and a move away from stereotyped character traits. The sf in *Galaxy* then, due to its supposed orientation, would be more likely to contain such aspects, giving the publication a perceived sense of maturity and depth, at least to those looking for a more 'mature' genre. Conklin refers to *The Demolished Man* as a 'fascinating [...] study of character' and Ben Reich as having a 'vivid personality'. This reference to, and appreciation for, the characterisation of human identity indicates that Bester's approach to utilising characters as humans rather than props was successful within this novel. Conklin writes that 'one is given a violently real view of a society in which the neuroses of 20th Century urbanism have been almost infinitely multiplied through extrapolation'.[6] Bester's extrapolation of contemporary concerns into a future society echoes his consideration in 'The Trematode' that future societies must include future individuals.[7] Thus, Bester's extrapolation of the current state of mentality and its impact on future citizens accurately depicts how he perceived psychology would develop.

Conklin notes that 'How [Reich] is finally trapped into a final recognition of his own basic motives is truly great psychological surrealism'.[8] The novel as 'psychological surrealism' is particularly apt but it can also be applied to Bester's œuvre as a whole. Surrealism is essentially an expression of the subconscious mind, which is similar to the theory behind Freudian psychoanalysis. Other features of surrealism, such as the irrational juxtaposition of images, can be seen in Bester's pairing of contrasts while a further aspect of surrealism, automatism, is produced through ideas of conformity and identity crises.[9] This is most strongly seen in Jordan Lennox, who suffers a dissociative fugue state resulting in his creation of multiple identities and the dissociative amnesia for the threats he makes against himself. The

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[5] Latham, p. 83.
[6] Conklin, p. 100.
[7] Alfred Bester, 'The Trematode: A Critique of Modern Science Fiction', *The Best Science-Fiction Stories: 1953*, ed. by Everett F. Bleiler and T. E. Dikty (New York, NY: Frederick Fell, 1953), pp. 11-22.
[8] Conklin, p. 100.
[9] 'surrealism, n.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015) <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/195019?redirectedFrom=surrealism#eid> [accessed 17 July 2015].

inability of his original identity to control these incidents represents the uncontrolled unconsciousness which allows escape from the conformity found in Lennox's life, thereby enabling release from conformed automatism through an unconscious lack of control.

What Conklin chooses to emphasise in his review is Bester's attention to language, psychology, characters, and neuroses. Conklin mentions H. H. Holmes' review of the novel, which Conklin calls 'lauding', but criticises Holmes' lack of appreciation for the novel's typographical inventions, specifically the use of symbols within names (e.g. @tkins and Wyg&).[10] Holmes was a pseudonym for Anthony Boucher, editor of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and Boucher was also the one who convinced Bester to include an ending to 'Star Light, Star Bright', thereby demonstrating a pattern of disinterest in Bester's narrative nuances.[11]

Bester's attention to detail and presentation of text on a page is most likely a result of his history in comic books. Bester claims 'the comic book days' gave him 'splendid training [...] in visualization [...] [and] dialogue' and considers himself 'extremely sensitive to tempo [...] [and] word color and context'.[12] This training and sensitivity can be seen in Bester's presentation of words and ideas through symbols, images, and word placement. A particular example of this is Bester's method of presenting thought patterns in *The Demolished Man* as a literal rendering of the internal made external. In 1955, Ralph Ellison commented that 'The individual man […] "is more apt to get a sense of wonder, a sense of self-awareness and a sharper reflection of his world from a comic book than from most novels".'[13] Ellison's consideration of comics implies that Bester transferred more than just his narrative style and approach from comics to text, since self-awareness and a reflection of the world is what Bester endeavoured to foster in his writing.

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[10] Conklin, p. 101.
[11] Malcolm Edwards, John Clute and David Langford, 'Boucher, Anthony', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, (25 Oct. 2014) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/boucher_anthony> [accessed 30 October 2014]; Alfred Bester, 'Star Light, Star Bright', in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 38-55.
[12] Alfred Bester, 'My Affair With Science Fiction', in *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 443-76 (pp. 455, 468).
[13] Thomas Schaub, *American Fiction in the Cold War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 66; Schaub is quoting, Ralph Ellison and [unknown] 'What's Wrong with the American Novel?', *American Scholar* 24, Autumn 1955, pp. 464-503 (p. 472).

Ultimately, Conklin declares *The Demolished Man* a 'magnificent novel'.[14] His noting of Bester's success in conveying psychology and neuroses combined with an intriguing plot and in-depth character studies encourages Bester's hope that his readers, sf or otherwise, would be having similar reactions. The exposure of his readership to such considerations would be aligned with Bester's attempts to demonstrate the usefulness of psychology and portray 'accurate' characters to his readers.

P(eter) Schuyler Miller also wrote a review of *The Demolished Man*, published in his *Astounding Science-Fiction* feature, 'The Reference Library' (December 1953 (May 1954 [UK])).[15] Malcolm Edwards and Mike Ashley write of Miller that 'He was not a particularly demanding critic, but his judgements were generally shrewd, his enthusiasm never waned, and his column's coverage was remarkably comprehensive'.[16] Miller's review reflects Conklin's as he also praises the novel but, though Miller similarly draws attention to the society in which it takes place, he does not consider the use of psychology.

Miller does praise Bester's combination of mystery and detection with sf as being particularly skilful. Though Miller claims the use of telepathy to be 'utterly fascinating', he does not examine it in relation to psychology. [17] However, Miller's belief that it is a successful depiction of detection and telepathy in a futuristic setting does indicate Conklin's praise of the believability of such a society. Furthermore, Miller refers to the culture within *The Demolished Man* as 'grotesque and repulsive' and compares it to *The Space Merchants*, which he calls 'contendingly memorable'.[18] If this future society is an example of modern neuroses writ large, then the repulsive nature is designed to warn contemporary readers of the side effects of modern anxieties. Early in *The Space Merchants,* a description of the workings of the ad industry explains how they are keyed into 'every basic trauma and neurosis in

[14] Conklin, p. 101.
[15] P. Schuyler Miller, 'Review: *The Demolished Man*', *Astounding Science Fiction*, vol. 10, no. 5, May 1954, p. 122.
[16] Malcolm Edwards and Mike Ashley, 'Miller, P Schuyler', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, (28 Oct. 2014) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/miller_p_schuyler> [accessed 3 November 2014].
[17] Miller, 'Review: *The Demolished Man*', p. 122; For a further look at the interplay between science fiction and detective fiction, and a discussion of *The Demolished Man* in this regard, see Hazel Beasley Pierce, *A Literary Symbiosis: Science Fiction/Fantasy Mystery* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983).
[18] Miller, 'Review: *The Demolished Man*', p. 122; Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, *The Space Merchants* (London: Gollancz, 2003).

American life today'.[19] The parallel use of neuroses not only amplifies the connection Miller makes between *The Demolished Man* and *The Space Merchants* but the literary fascination with abnormal psychology within these types of novels underlines which aspects of American society lend themselves to that 'grotesque' and 'repulsive' nature.

Miller claims that the novel 'will be a classic, and […] may well be rated the best s-f novel of 1953'. Miller further notes that 'Readers were nominating it for the "Basic SF Library" list a full year before it came out'.[20] Both the reader response and Miller's praise are apt considering *The Demolished Man* won the first Hugo Award for Best Novel in 1953.[21] These reviews not only indicate *The Demolished Man*'s reception but the success of its portrayal of neuroses within contemporary culture, which Bester continued to explore throughout the rest of the decade.

II.

Though his work was well-received, Bester's fictional output between 1954 and 1955 is minimal. This scarcity can likely be attributed to Bester's lifestyle following the publication of *Who He?*.[22] The profit he made from reprint sales and a movie deal enabled he and his wife to move abroad. 'The only writing materials [he] brought with [him] were a portable, [his] Commonplace Book, a thesaurus, and an idea for another science fiction novel.' This science fiction novel ended up being *The Stars My Destination*, published the same year Bester moved back to the United States to work for *Holiday* (1956).[23] Despite this hiatus between novels, the short stories published in the meantime foreground Bester's earlier explorations of psychology and recognition of an internal struggle over which one has no control.

Identity crises throughout Bester's work have mainly been explored through narration. However, between 1954 and 1955, Bester begins to explore these concepts through dialogue. The characters themselves have begun to recognise their own

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[19] Pohl and Kornbluth, p. 4.
[20] Miller, 'Review: *The Demolished Man*', p. 122.
[21] Peter Nicholls, 'Bester, Alfred', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (22 Oct. 2014) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/bester_alfred> [accessed 3 November 2014].
[22] Alfred Bester, *Who He?* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, [n.d.]).
[23] Bester, 'My Affair with Science Fiction', in *Redemolished*, pp. 467-68, 467, 472; Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), p. 11; Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, ed. by Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).

insecurities and the discussion of the split self has become an external one. The short stories published in this interim period begin to deal with identity crises overtly rather than as plot twists or information unknown to both characters and reader (e.g. Reich's relation to D'Courtney and Lennox's connection to the letters). Bester's psychological stories of identity have become about identity itself rather than only using identity to drive plot. This external focus on inner space enables the reader to directly respond to these concepts as real-world considerations.

The first of these fictions is '5,271,009' (*Fantasy and Science Fiction*, March 1954).[24] Essentially a rendering of the process of psychoanalysis, Solon Aquila guides Jeffrey Halsyon to psychological self-awareness and a reconciled self. The story's basis of a man whose private fantasies are not as unique as he imagined comes from Bester's use of his own fantasies within the story. Bester writes that he came across Freud's work on common insecurity dreams and that, while annoyed he was not as unique as he thought, was '*relieved to discover that I was all natural and normal. I was a healthy neurotic American boy*'.[25] In writing about 'typical dreams', most likely the discussion Bester is referencing, Freud considers there to be 'a certain number of dreams which almost everyone has dreamt alike and which we […] assume must have the same meaning for everyone. […] they presumably arise from the same sources in every case'.[26] In writing the story, Bester describes an argument he had with himself in which he wondered, '*What makes you think that readers will identify with my fantasies?*', to which he replied '*What makes you think you're so different? You share them with everybody else.*'[27] This lack of originality demonstrates the clichéd nature of fantasies in the guise of self-referential mocking of the sf genre as a whole, which reflects Bester's earlier comments regarding pulps and stereotyped characters. The use of dialogue to explore crises of the self is indicative not only of the growing self-awareness within Bester's work but the ability of mannerisms and speech to both identify and obscure the self.

Solon Aquila is a key example of Bester's approach to characterisation. Aquila claims many sources for his namesake, including the original Latin of Aquila

[24] Alfred Bester, '5,271,009', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 56-90. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[25] Alfred Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit [introduction]', in *Starlight: The Great Short Fiction of Alfred Bester* (Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday, 1976), pp. 45-46 (p. 45). Author's own emphasis.
[26] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. by Angela Richards, trans. by James Strachey, 15 vols (London: Penguin Books, 1976), IV: The Penguin Freud Library, p. 339.
[27] Alfred Bester, '5,271,009 [introduction]', in *Starlight*, pp. 5-7, p. 6. Author's own emphasis.

(which he states means aquiline) though refutes himself later by explaining he took the name from one of Rudyard Kipling's heroes, claiming Kipling is his idol.[28] Aquila choosing his name instead of being given it displays a particular individuality not usually afforded by Bester in regards to naming. However, Aquila is also said to be a prolific liar and so he cannot be trusted even to the source of his own named identity (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 57). The association of his name with the constellation of an eagle lends credence to the supposition that Aquila may be an alien.[29] Aquila's forename is more earthly by being reminiscent of the Greek lawgiver and teacher; a position Aquila fulfils in attempting to teach Halsyon how to reconcile himself.[30] Aquila's forename therefore represents his position on earth while his surname represents his celestial origin, thereby revealing two halves of himself, which, when put together, not only form his full name but his full identity.

Halsyon's name, when considered with a 'c' rather than an 's', has denotations of peacefulness and a state of calm and quiet. The connotative associations of 'halcyon' with nostalgia for one's youth echoes Halsyon's obsession with maintaining his childhood, thus making his identity and name symbiotic. If Halsyon were to give up his youthful fantasies, he would no longer be nostalgic for his youth. Thus, this connotation of Halsyon's name would be significant during his identity crisis, but not after reconciliation. Once reconciliation had occurred, the destructive quality of his psychology would dissipate. At that point, his name would take on its other meaning of being associated with the kingfisher and its connection with calmness. Thus, ideas of peacefulness would continue, but lose their nostalgic associations.[31] Both men having bird-related names underscores their relationship and reflects connections between identity and names regardless of whether the name is chosen or not.

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[28] Aquiline furthers the eagle association with Aquila and references the constellation related to him, thus using his name to demonstrate his point of origin. The name Aquila is taken from Rudyard Kipling's 'Young Men at the Manor'. See Rudyard Kiplng, *Puck of Pook's Hill* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994), pp. 35-51.

[29] 'Aquila, n.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/249219?redirectedFrom=Aquila#eid> [accessed 17 July 2015].

[30] John Lewis, *Solon the Thinker: Political Thought in Archaic Athens* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 2006)

[31] 'halcyon, n. and adj.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/83373?rskey=4giJcp&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 17 July 2015].

When Aquila questions James Derelict about Halsyon's whereabouts, rather than asking for Halsyon by name, Aquila inquires after an artist who is 'like Bosch. Like Heinrich Kley' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 58). Halsyon is thus identified through his shared qualities with others, making perceptions of him contingent on external comparisons rather than through his own self. By both influencing and being influenced by society, the self becomes predicated on the fluctuations between itself and society, rather than on its own existence.

Aquila does not directly reveal himself in Halsyon's fantasies but he can be discerned through his body-type and mannerisms. Aquila described as 'tall, gaunt, sprightly in manner, [and] bitter in expression' while speaking 'a spectacular tongue of mixed metaphors and meanings. Dozens of languages and dialects came out in machine-gun bursts' (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 56, 57). Throughout Halsyon's fantasies, he encounters numerous characters who are described as tall, gaunt and bitter and who speak in a mixture of languages coupled with metaphors and exclamations. Through these descriptions and mannerisms, regardless of outward appearance, one can assume that these characters are all being portrayed by Aquila. These methods of identification are all external signifiers which contrast with Halsyon's fantasies, as internal signifiers.

Halsyon's fantasies as unoriginal is reflected in the title of the story itself. The number, 5,271,009, can be found repeated throughout the story in various instances. The number is associated both with identity and Halsyon's fantasies, which emphasises the role it plays throughout the story. The number's repetitive nature across fantasies indicates that if all fantasies belong to everybody, then so does the number, hence it not being confined to one identity or situation. This repetition is most strongly felt in the fantasy involving *Hamlet*, as the number reflects how many times it has been repeated.[32] The players are doomed to repeatedly perform the same scene, which Halsyon questions by saying, '"You call this life? Doing the same things over and over again? Saying the same things?"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 84). Though the concept is the most obvious in this fantasy, it can be seen in them all through the repetition of common themes and the general unoriginality of the fantasies.

[32] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by G. R. Hibbard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987; repr. Oxford University Press, 2008). See act five, scene one for the section referenced by Bester.

The reason for Aquila's exposure of Halsyon's fantasies is to force Halsyon to relinquish childish impulses. Halsyon does not accept the transition easily, as he believes his childhood identity to be the driving force behind his art. Recalling considerations of Freudian sublimation, Halsyon is turning a socially unacceptable aspect of self, such as childish behaviour, into something accepted, such as art. This echoes the discussion of sublimation in previous works but the idea of the creative artist is considered in other areas of Freudianism.

Freud likens the creative individual to the child at play which can be seen in Halsyon's split between his adult and child selves. The adult is said to create 'phantasies' (day-dreams), such as Halsyon's conception of the 'Faraway Fiend', and the surrogate nature of these day-dreams encourage a break with reality.[33] Further connecting childhood with escape, Halsyon's own immaturity echoes other works by Bester in which individuals believe they can escape the realities of life by retreating to another time or place. When Halsyon is escaping from the mental hospital, he reassures himself that he will be able to return to his mother and father and be a kid again, which he considers to be 'safe[]' and 'sane[]' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 65). Halsyon's adult self, by virtue of being in a mental hospital, is considered less sane than his younger self, thereby encouraging him to take on the aspect of his identity which is most stable and thus socially acceptable.

Additionally, contemporary views of aberrant psychology are indicated through the equating of sanity with safety, specifically at a time when 'abnormal' would have signified the 'other'. Alan Nadel refers to sanity as a relative term which 'merely indicates conformity to a set of norms'.[34] This relationship between sanity and conformity recalls previous discussions of conformity as 'safe' and reiterates Halsyon's associations between safety and sanity. When Halsyon arrives at Aquila's apartment, he is given a drink which returns to him his clarity of thought. Aquila informs him it is only a temporary return to sanity implying that medication cannot cure mental disorders, they can only alleviate them. However, he also claims that '"Any doctor can do it"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 66). The implication is of psychology and it being available but not used. The ease with which the formula is given blurs the distinction between sane and insane by making it a line easily

[33] Sigmund Freud, 'Creative Writers and Day-dreaming', in *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology, 1900-2000*, ed. by Jon Cook (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 41-46 (pp. 42, 43).
[34] Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 71.

crossed. The formula is thus a type of mask, demonstrated by the ability to use it at will to present a different version of the self. Aquila as extra-terrestrial and psychoanalyst implies a distinctly human lack of psychological understanding. Aquila particularly understands the danger of attempting to maintain both the immature and mature as he says that '"It was the child in Solon Aquila that destroyed him and led him into the sickness that destroyed his life. […] Do not make the same mistake"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 89). The fact that Aquila has been exiled and labelled a 'black sheep' emphasises the social danger of having this split self, as it labels one as the 'other'. Being sure of one's self is then more important than being an adult as Aquila does not argue that adulthood is better than childhood but rather that you should not use one to escape the other.

Halsyon's obsession with drawing what he calls the Faraway Fiend (which is revealed to be Aquila) on banknotes results in art which is 'hateful', depicting a 'diabolic face set in a hellish background. It was a face to strike terror, in a scene to inspire loathing' (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 62, 59). Though the face is described as being Aquila's, the background as 'hellish' indicates the banknote itself. Money as something 'hellish' then feeds into the perceived dangers of capitalism, as seen in works such as *The Space Merchants.*

Halsyon's obsession with Aquila as the Faraway Fiend originated at a ball six months previous, where Halsyon first met Aquila. Aquila's uncensored effusion of his self and emotional state at the ball led to Halsyon's obsession with him as the Faraway Fiend. Halsyon claims Aquila passed him '"Wearing no mask"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 67). For another person mentally exposed to be too much for another individual to handle speaks to the scope of the internal self and the sheer amount of unconscious material that is available but never seen.[35] In escaping from the mental hospital, Halsyon wears a mask in order to elude the staff. It is not a psychological mask however, but a physical one. He utilises the ink he has spilt to 'cunningly mop[] his blackened face with a hand that only masked it more' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 65). As such, Halsyon is actually wearing two masks, one internally and one externally. Halsyon is attempting to pass himself off as Derelict, and therefore is using the mask not only to hide himself but to acquire a different identity.

[35] Sigmund Freud, 'The Unconscious', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis,* intro. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 142-83 (p. 143).

Consequently, Derelict is stripped of the ability to identify as himself while Halsyon's authentic self is repressed even further.

Replacing one identity with another is a common theme throughout the story. A notable example of this is Halsyon's artwork on the banknotes. Halsyon is said to be drawing 'the face of the Faraway Fiend over George Washington's portrait' and that 'the Faraway Fiend [...] was replacing the first President' (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 61, 62). As such, a hellish entity is shown to supplant a patriotic American symbol. The replacement of an American icon with a 'fiend' signifies anxiety over the potentiality of Communists winning the Cold War and America coming under control of the Soviets. Halsyon makes reference to 'faraway fiends from faraway fears' which could imply that the fiends are created through society's fear, rather than the other way around, as well as indicating the fear is unfocused. Patrick O'Donnell's discussion of the fear of the 'other' as an externalisation of internal conflict is seen in the coupling of 'faraway fiends from faraway fears' with the exclamation 'Who's that!' which connects Halsyon's private fears with his social situation (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 62).[36] Halsyon utters this phrase in expectation of the Faraway Fiend but it is instead a doctor who enters his cell in the hospital. This confusion underscores the expectation of an enemy where there is none, as well as displaying how easily individuals can be confused for that which they are not.

Derelict also visits Halsyon in the hospital but Halsyon refers to Derelict as 'the stranger-man' until Halsyon removes a portion of the mask he wears to overplay his condition. When Halsyon 'remembers' Derelict, he begins to speak and act in a more adult manner, indicating that removing a part of his mask also removed part of his childish self. Derelict notes this adult manner to be Halsyon's 'normal tone'. William H. Whyte, Jr. questions 'What is normalcy?' and refers to it as self-destructive and 'one of the great breeders of neuroses'.[37] Similar to Nadel's discussion of sanity, 'normal' is indicated to be relative to each individual and therefore should not be sociologically defined.

Halsyon's use of a mask means he is essentially role-playing the self rather than presenting it authentically. Derelict is unable to see this because the Halsyon in front of him does not match the Halsyon he is used to and so, to him, must be an

[36] Patrick O'Donnell, *Latent Destinies: Cultural Paranoia and Contemporary U.S. Narrative* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 13.
[37] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), pp. 397-98.

aberrant manifestation of his personality despite its authenticity. Though the mask which Halsyon utilises is not him, the insane, immature man behind it is, despite its departure from the accepted norm. Aquila's nicknames for Halsyon also demonstrate this idea of role-playing an aspect of the self. Aquila twice refers to Halsyon as Lochinvar, again conflating Halsyon's identity with another and implying that he is role-playing a self-constructed romantic hero.[38]

Halsyon's fantasies further this role-play by demonstrating Halsyon's acting out of various scenarios. In one fantasy, Halsyon is believed to be the only person with information on how to successfully defeat the Grssh and save the Earth. What this situation also depicts is a continuation of Bester's concerns regarding the over-reliance on experts. Halsyon mocks the General Assembly's inability to solve the problem by asking, '"Where are your experts? Your professors? Your specialists? Where are your electronic calculators? Your super thinking machines?"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 76). Such a heavy reliance on experts has rendered the General Assembly incapable of recognising intelligence from any other source, thereby making Halsyon a last resort rather than an expected source of information. It is this vital information that makes Halsyon important in this particular fantasy, however, and when other sources of the same information arrive, it removes Halsyon's significance in the scenario.

When Aquila begins the procedure to allow Halsyon to live out his fantasies, he refers to himself as a warlock or witch-pathologist. Aquila implies that most scientists are warlocks and they have deceived the public through camouflage, implying the use of masks as well as emphasising the gap between the activities of experts and the average person. Aquila reassures Halsyon that they are modern warlocks, explaining that '"Witch's brew now complies with Pure Food and Drug Act. Familiars one hundred percent sterile. Sanitary brooms. Cellophane-wrapped curses. Father Satan in rubber gloves. Thanks to Lord Lister; or is it Pasteur?"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 68). Not only does this illuminate modern consumerism and obsession with technological advancements, Aquila confuses the names of the two scientists. This confusion implies the technology is more important than the person who discovered it. Regardless of this confusion, Aquila comments 'My idol', not specifying which scientist he means but rather indicating that whichever is the right

[38] Walter Scott, *Marmion; A Tale of Flodden Field*, 5th edn (London: J. M'Creery, 1810).

one is worthy of his admiration (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 68). Achievement as more significant than identity echoes Aquila's earlier description of Halsyon through his achievements and similarity to other artists rather than by his name.

Concerns over modern science are also seen in references throughout the story to nuclear weaponry. The dangers of technology are shown in the first of Halsyon's dreams, wherein he is the last virile man on earth, due to nuclear war. It is described as 'The two-hour war' and that there were 'Atom bombs everywhere' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 69). The shortness of the war speaks to the destructive ability of nuclear weapons and implies that war would be unable to continue after the use of nuclear weapons as there would be no one left to fight, nor anything to fight over. This sense of 'futurelessness' indicates David E. Nye's conception of a 'death-world' created through atomic weapons which 'undermined that sense of the world as "always already there"'.[39] The biological concerns of nuclear weaponry, in the form of hard radiation, have made the world's men sterile, leaving Halsyon as the only man capable of repopulating the earth. As such, everyone else's misfortune is Halsyon's gain, thereby giving him the uniqueness he craves, despite its morbid origins.

A similar fantasy involves Halsyon being the last man on earth. He eventually meets a woman, who, through her description, can be recognised as Judith, the woman Halsyon loves in reality. She tells him that they '"are the last of the old civilization and the first of the new"'. The presumption that they will need to repopulate the earth reflects Halsyon's previous fantasy of being the last virile man and his desire for the world to be one of his own making which is made literal in both fantasies as all humanity would be descended from him. Judith explains that Professor Field's '"well-intentioned but ill-advised experiment in nuclear fission has wiped mankind off the face of the earth"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 86).[40] Explanations for how the situations in Halsyon's fantasies come about are thus repetitive and indicative of the concerns over nuclear war. The experiment as well-intentioned but ill-advised reflects Jonathan Schell's consideration that 'a reassuring gloss was placed on the nuclear peril' in the 1950s and that nuclear weapons were 'seen as a

[39] Jane Caputi, 'Psychic Numbing, Radical Futurelessness, and Sexual Violence in the Nuclear Film', in *The Nightmare Considered: Critical Essays on Nuclear War Literature*, ed. by Nancy Anisfield (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991), pp. 58-70 (p. 65); David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p. 228.
[40] For a similar look at the destructive results of nuclear experiments, see Ray Bradbury, 'Embroidery', in *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 115-19.

lasting necessity, even a positive good'. Schell accredits this positive intention to nuclear weapons' ability to keep the threat of 'world domination by a totalitarian power' at bay.[41] Thus, though ill-advised in terms of their destructive nature, the use of nuclear weapons was well-intentioned for national security.

In addition to concerns regarding nuclear war, other fantasies focus on additional aspects of contemporary society. Halsyon's fantasy wherein he is restricted to the text of *Hamlet* examines the confining nature of conformity. Halsyon is told not to question his situation as '"It is a conspiracy we dare not fight. This is the life every man lives. [...] There is no escape"'. When Halsyon questions this lack of escape, he is told that the clown is afraid of '"our owners"'. The idea of ownership indicates a totalitarian idea of society and the clown elaborates by saying '"There is no life, no freedom, no will"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 84). This conversation underpins the conformist nature during the early stages of the Cold War. While individuals did have free will, it was perhaps constrained by socially accepted ideas that disabled individuals from utilising their full identity, leading to the wearing of masks and associated consequences. Alan Nadel writes that the Cold War enabled 'large cultural narratives to unify, codify, and contain – perhaps *intimidate* is the best word – the personal narratives of its populations'.[42] Thus, even though individuals were still allowed their personal narratives, they were forced to enact them within strict borders determined by wider society.

This constrained sense of identity leads to Halsyon's exclamation that they are puppets and he intends to revolt. In being told that revolting would be madness, one is reminded of discussions of the connection between conformity and safety/sanity. Attempts to display individualism would therefore make one the 'other'. The obvious 'other' of the Cold War being Communists, association with the 'other' would risks threats of arrest or being brought before the House Un-American Activities Committee.[43] Being a puppet is similar to the wearing of a mask as they both rely on a performative element and enable conformity. This is similarly seen in Halsyon's fantasy involving the Grssh, where it is explained that the Grssh feed off

[41] Jonathan Schell, 'The Gift of Time', in *Approaches to Peace*, pp. 90-99 (p. 91).
[42] Nadel, p. 4. Author's own emphasis.
[43] 'In the decade following World War II, there appeared a new kind of congressional inquiry […] This new phase of legislative inquiry involved a broad-scale intrusion into the lives and affairs of private citizens.' Similar to blacklisting and McCarthyism, the HUAC based itself on the guise of national security but, in actuality, operated on scare-tactics.; *Watkins v. United States*, 354 U.S., 187-8, 195-8, 200-2, 205, 207-8, 215-6.

psychological trauma. They rely upon 'psychotic horrors which they engendered in man through mental control' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 74). This mental control can be linked to conformity and social expectations and emphasises the external nature of this influence.

Conformity is further seen in Halsyon's experience as a child in which he realises that children are expected to behave a particular way and therefore fulfil an adult's perception of how children should be. In his fantasy where he returns to childhood, Halsyon believes he can relive this experience to its fullest now that he has the wisdom of an adult. This situation echoes H. Beam Piper's 'Time and Time Again' (1947), in which a soldier is transported back in time to when he was a teenager and enlists his father's help in preventing World War III.[44] Bester's replication of this type of situation demonstrates his use of tropes to attack pulp writing by deconstructing the clichés and conventionalities of standard sf, which he discusses in relation to his writing of '5,271,009'.

In the introduction to '5,271,009', Bester explains that he was asked to write a story based on a magazine cover. Initially finding the cover 'garish', 'absurd', and 'preposterous', he ultimately agreed to write the story by deciding that he had '*been making fun of the clichés and stereotypes of science fiction for years*. *This certainly is a chance for more of the same*'. In agreeing, however, he reasoned that '*while you're at it, the least you can do, if you're honest, is make fun of yourself, too*'.[45] It is for this reason that Bester uses his own fantasies within the story. Unlike Piper's story, however, Halsyon discovers that the power of a ten-year-old boy is rather limited. His inability to get adults to understand him perhaps pokes fun at Piper's expectation of the quick acceptance of a child with an adult mind or the usefulness of a child in preventing war.

The fact that Halsyon's childhood and adult selves are required to work together in this fantasy underpins concerns regarding Halsyon's split self. Halsyon complains that '"You keep us out of your world, but you keep barging into ours. If you don't respect us, why don't you leave us alone?"' (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 81, 82). Though Halsyon is referring to the interactions between adults and children, this statement can also include other social barriers, such as between psychologists and

[44] H. Beam Piper, 'Time and Time Again', *Astounding Science Fiction*, vol. 39, no. 2, April 1947, pp. 27-43.
[45] Alfred Bester, '5,271,009 [introduction]', p. 6.

patients or experts and laypersons. Simply leaving each other alone may erase social strife but it would ignore the underlying issue of the 'other', which, as can be seen throughout the story, is not always as 'other' as it is perceived to be.

Halsyon appears to understand psychology by employing terminology and ideas relevant to the subject but the reception he receives by offering this advice demonstrates mistrust or misunderstanding of the field. Halsyon determines that Rennahan, another student who is bullying him, is actually just insecure and compelled to fight to prove himself.[46] Halsyon attempts to explain this to his teachers by calling Rennahan a neurotic and describing his compulsions. However, instead of the amazement he was hoping for, he is sent to the principal's office for insolence, where he derides the teachers' competency for not understanding psychoanalysis.

The principal understands Halsyon to have gained this knowledge through 'dirty books', though Halsyon wonders what is so dirty about Freud (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 79, 80). The Freudian reliance on the sexual self in terms of psycho-analysis is likely responsible for this 'dirty' nature as Freud believed that an understanding of human sexuality was required in order for 'large areas of human life [to] become intelligible'. The school's reaction is a satirical response to the taboo nature of sexuality and the belief that its discussion was 'a shocking and prohibited attack on human dignity'.[47] Halsyon's knowledge of Freud causes him to be regarded as a degenerate in need of correction showing the disapproving attitude towards Freudian psychoanalysis and those who employ it. The irony of this disapproval is that the school employs a psychologist to correct Halsyon's behaviour. Employing a psychologist would seem forward-thinking but he only gives Halsyon a pill rather than attempting to understand his psyche. Randall Bennett Woods explains that there were groups of 'psychologists and analysts who sought to modify or even refute the Freudian tradition', making the school psychologist an

[46] This argument echoes lyrics in 'Gee, Officer Krupke' from *West Side Story*. For example, 'This boy don't need a judge, he needs an analyst's care!/It's just his neurosis that oughta be curbed./He's psychologic'ly disturbed!'. The line 'In my opinion, this child don't need to have his head shrunk at all. Juvenile delinquency is purely a social disease!' echoes the dislike shown in the story for psychoanalysis and indicates the sociological influence on behaviour. See *West Side Story*, dir. by Jerome Robbins, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Winter Garden Theatre (New York, NY, 1957).
[47] Anna Freud, 'Introduction [Human Sexuality]', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 271-76 (p. 271).

example of a doctor who does not prescribe to Freudian psychoanalysis.[48] The use of medication recalls Aquila's comment that any doctor could temporarily cure insanity. However, the difference between Aquila's formula and the pill is the difference between assistance and control, as Aquila aims to help Halsyon but the psychologist aims to subdue him.

The psychologist tells Halsyon that '"We are two different breeds of animals, children and adults. [...] There is no meeting of the minds. [...] There is nothing but war"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 82). The separation between children and adults reflects Halsyon's identity crisis and the association with war further emphasises the mental struggle within 1950s' society as parallel to, or surpassing, that of physical war. Halsyon, under the influence of the drugs, responds that the '"Whole world's hateful. Full of conflicts'n'insults 'at can't be r'solved […] S'like a joke somebody's playin' on us. Silly jokes without point"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 82). Though these comments are obvious in regards to the Cold War, the idea of it as a joke echoes Bester's earlier remarks concerning McCarthyism, such as blacklisting being a laugh in *Who He?*. For these jokes to lack a point, however, emphasises reactions to the Cold War as excessive and echoes the danger of 'ill-advised' nuclear experiments in Halsyon's fantasies. The psychologist chuckles at Halsyon's realisation and, since his character is being played by Aquila, it can be presumed that he is amused that Halsyon does not recognise how silly and pointless his own fantasies are and how they are nearly always created and ended by conflict. Halsyon's fantasies are thus shown to reflect the contemporary situation and the exchange further demonstrates Halsyon's ignorance of his own psychology.

In contrast, Aquila appears to not only understand his own psychology but the influential nature of the external world. Derelict tells Aquila he would rather not show him the drawing Halsyon has made on the banknote, claiming it is for Aquila's personal reasons. Aquila's unawareness of the resemblance between himself and the drawing means he cannot know Derelict's reasons and tells him, '"Explain myself to me"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 58). Though this phrasing is perhaps simply one of Aquila's mannerisms, it does raise questions of how one obtains or explores their own sense of self. Reflecting therapists and their attempts to explain other people's inner workings, the implication of psychology indicates that an individual is

[48] Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 146.

potentially incapable of understanding themselves and may need an external observer in order to understand their internal self. Aquila asks, '"Does Halsyon know myself? *Ergo sum*"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 59). *Ergo sum* references Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum,* though the absence of *cogito* means that *ergo sum* refers to what has been said prior, which is Aquila's questioning of whether Halsyon knows him.[49] As such, it is not Aquila's thinking that establishes his existence, but Halsyon's acknowledgement of his existence. Aquila's self is therefore predicated on Halsyon's knowing him and furthers the internal/external split seen throughout the story by implying that the self is at least partially created through external observance.

Before Aquila induces Halsyon's first fantasy, he mentions 'Father Freud' and comments that '"We wipe your slate clean at a very small price"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 69). This price is knowledge of the identity crisis and, with it, the ability to choose one half of the split self, as both cannot continue to be maintained. Though it reconciles the psyche, it means a concrete decision regarding which identity one wishes to preserve, which can be as difficult as allowing both to coexist. Wiping the slate clean brings up questions of destroying identity in order to heal the psyche and whether reconciling the self leads to one's true identity or destroys it in the process. The idea of wiping the slate (psyche) clean also evokes ideas of the tabula rasa. John Locke refers to the mind as 'white paper' and that all knowledge is founded in experience 'and from that it ultimately derives its self'. One's self-perception is thus created both internally and externally, based on the self's experience with reality and its own mentality.[50] It further alludes to demolition in *The Demolished Man,* though the difference is that Reich had more than his identity crisis erased; he lost his entire personality. Halsyon only loses his split self, implying that Aquila's technique is more exact, and that one's psyche can be cured without damaging the individual.

In helping Halsyon reconcile himself, Aquila acknowledges that his lack of mask was '"was the key that unlocked the door"' to Halsyon's identity crisis, but that Halsyon ultimately '"fell into a chasm of [his] own making"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 67). External influence is therefore implied to only indirectly cause

[49] 'cogito, n.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/35866?redirectedFrom=cogito#eid> [accessed 17 July 2015].
[50] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1979), p. 104; Andrew M. Colman, 'tabula rasa', in *A Dictionary of Psychology* (2014) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199534067.001.0001>.

an identity crisis since the self must already be susceptible. This susceptibility comes from being unable to 'protect the individuality of the self by resisting tirelessly the system and the persons that would deprive him of it'.[51] Demonstrating the effect of conformity on the self, the individual becomes damaged by allowing external influence to dictate the self. Aquila further states, '"you must climb out of your own chasm"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 67). Just as the external can only indirectly cause the crisis, it can also only indirectly solve the crisis. Donald P. Spence asserts that 'the results of self-analysis can be thought of as a series of invisible reincarnations' which 'operates below the surface and is largely invisible to outsiders'.[52] Reincarnation parallels reconciliation of the self as it allows the authentic self to be 'reborn'. As such, this internal reincarnation occurs beyond the realm of the external and thus is untouched by society.

The conflicting interactions between the internal and external self are initially seen in Halsyon's fantasy in which he is the last virile man on earth. The World Procurer informs Halsyon that he is 'loathed', to which Halsyon responds, '"But you told me I was loved"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 73). Halsyon has moulded a portion of himself around information that he was given only to be told it is inaccurate, meaning that portion of himself created from it is also inaccurate. Thus, a part of his identity has been rendered false. Halsyon believes he is loved because he is the solution to the world's sterility problem and women are seemingly pleased to procreate with him. Though the women may externally seem to be cooperating, internally, their emotions are the opposite. Halsyon refers to himself as the '"Father of the new world"', to which the World Procurer responds, '"You are the father, but what child does not hate its father?"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 73). This exchange recalls the Freudian concept of the Oedipus complex and the son's negative emotions towards the father.[53]

Aquila, referencing 'Father Freud', explains that everyone having the same dreams does not make them good and that such dreams are for children, furthering their contribution to Halsyon's identity crisis. What the fantasies have also proven is that having these fantasies does not make one an individual. Judge Field, indignant at

[51] Roseline Intrater, *An Eye for an "I": Attrition of the Self in the Existential Novel* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 109.
[52] Donald P. Spence, 'Narrative Recursion', in *Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature*, ed. by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 188-210 (pp. 204, 205).
[53] Freud, 'Introduction [Human Sexuality]', p. 273.

Halsyon for believing he was the only one with information on the Grssh, points out his lack of originality.

> "You are all alike. You dream you are the one man with a secret, the one man with a wrong, the one man with an injustice, with a girl, without a girl, with or without anything. […] You bore me, you one-man dreamers."
>
> (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 78)

Demonstrating the growing psychological self-awareness within Bester's works, this idea of a one-man dreamer indicates repetitive nature of the fantasies, which Judge Field directly and externally recognises by explaining it to Halsyon.

Halsyon attempts to prove his originality in his fantasies by declaring himself to have a mutant strain in his genetic makeup which allows him to be the 'one-man'. This insistence on uniqueness reflects the self-referential nature of the story while mocking not only sf as a genre, but its fans as well. A mutant strain in Halsyon's DNA recalls aspects of fandom such as 'Fans are Slans', which 'Literally understood, [means] "fans are superman mutants"'.[54] For example, the reason Halsyon is still virile in his first fantasy is because the radiation has not affected him, which he is told is '"No doubt on account of a mysterious mutant strain in your makeup which makes you different"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 69). It is also this mutant strain that gives Halsyon the presence of mind to not only be aware of the repetition in the *Hamlet* fantasy but to want to fight it rather than accept it as the other characters do. However, in Halsyon's final fantasy, he is no longer the only one with this mutant strain.

Though he fantasises that he is the last man on earth, Judith is also still alive, making her the last woman on earth.[55] She comments that they must have survived the nuclear fission experiment which killed everyone else '"on account of some mysterious mutant strain in our makeup which makes us different"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 86). This last fantasy demonstrates Halsyon's growing realisation that he is not as unique as he believed and that, if he can imagine himself as the last man

[54] Richard H. Eney, ed., 'Fans are Slans', in *Fancyclopedia II* (Alexandria, VA: Operation Crifanac, 1959), p. 63.
[55] For another treatment of this trope within Bester's work, see Alfred Bester, 'They Don't Make Life Like They Used To', in *Virtual Unrealities,* pp. 191-224.

on earth, anyone else can do the same. The fact that Halsyon is not alone in his fantasy is literally because he is not alone in having these fantasies. This fantasy is also the only one in which Aquila does not appear, insinuating that Halsyon is coming to this realisation internally and no longer requires external aid in understanding his fantasies.

This final fantasy also differs from the rest in that it is the only one which Halsyon ends somewhat willingly and of his own accord. Though it is spurred through his despair over not being able to find a dentist for his toothache, Halsyon does have control over the gun he uses to kill himself. Despite this external impetus, Halsyon makes the internal decision whether to allow it to influence him or not. Halsyon's control of his fate is demonstrative of his gaining control over his split self. Halsyon's death in this fantasy symbolises the death of his identity crisis. When he wakes up, he has reached the point of reconciliation for which Aquila originally began the process. This internal destruction therefore represents Halsyon taking control of his mental self by killing his fantasies and rendering them irrelevant to a healthy psyche.

The destructive nature of Halsyon's fantasies can be linked to a comment of Aquila's upon finding Halsyon at his doorstep. Seeing Aquila, the Faraway Fiend, makes Halsyon scream, to which Aquila responds, '"No *Sturm und Drang*"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 65) *Sturm und Drang* is 'the impulse to give violent expression to one's individuality'.[56] Followers of the *Sturm und Drang* literary movement were 'urged on by the desire to live according to instinctive feeling […] not social norms and practical reasonableness'. They sought an expansion of the self and a transformation of society to allow for the full 'potentialities of the individual'.[57] However, Aquila's disapproval of its usage, no matter how unintentional on Halsyon's part, causes the opposite to occur.

Halsyon's fantasies can be seen to represent the violent expression of the inability to maintain the self, thus giving violent expression to conformity rather than individuality. Each of Halsyon's fantasies end in destructive violence: he is attacked, tortured, drugged, ends up in the seventh circle of Dante's Inferno (the seventh circle

[56] Stuart Atkins, 'Sturm und Drang', in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan, 3rd edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 1383.
[57] Roy Pascal, *The German Sturm und Drang* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 4, 148, 169.

being for the violent), and commits suicide.[58] Halsyon's fantasies all end at the point in which he begins to express his individuality, which is then violently suppressed by either the masses, psychological control, or external forces. The exception is Halsyon's suicide, as there the violence comes from within. Halsyon's attempts to express his individuality are met with the same response he initially received from Aquila: a negation of the attempt. Even Halsyon's ultimate expression of free-will, his suicide, involves violence against the self, thus firmly tying violence and individuality together. Struggling to reconcile the self internally while maintaining individuality externally can be seen in one of Aquila's phrases. While attempting to escape one of his fantasies, Halsyon is helped by a man fitting Aquila's physical description, who says, '"*Kulturkampf der Menschheit*"' (Bester, '5,271,009', p. 74. Author's own emphasis). The phrase roughly translates as 'cultural war of mankind'.[59] This recounts Halsyon's struggle between self and society and expands it to include mankind in general.

The struggle between self and society is evident in '5,271,009' from the 'real' world (external) to Halsyon's fantasies (internal). For Halsyon to resolve his identity crisis, he must internally purge himself of this struggle. Aquila tells Halsyon the number of decisions a person must make in their lifetime and that '"it is the maturity of these decisions that decides whether a man is a man or a child"'. Aquila claims Halsyon's dreams are 'baby dreams' and that they reflect a mind concerned with escape. By having such concerns, however, the individual entertains immature fantasies '"equally popular, equally empty"'. This idea of 'baby dreams' echoes Bester's belief that much of sf is based on immature clichés. Further, the idea of '"escap[ing] reality with the dream that life is make-believe"' demonstrates irresponsibility, not individuality (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 87, 88, 87). In order to maintain the self, one must do so despite society and external influence. Bester implies that a desire to escape these things demonstrates a weak self unable to withstand external influence.

Aquila explains that Halsyon can choose to maintain his childhood self if he wishes since it would be a choice made of his own free will. It is not which self

[58] Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling, 3 vols. (New York, NY: Oxford University Pres, 1997) I: *Inferno*, pp. 185-225, Canto 12-14.
[59] Roland Breitsprecher and others, 'Kulturkampf', in *German-English Dictionary* (London: Collins, 1984), p. 703; Roland Breitsprecher and others, 'der', in *German-English Dictionary*, p. 273; Roland Breitsprecher and others, 'Menschheit', in *German-English Dictionary*, p. 773.

Halsyon chooses but rather that he chooses one self and commits to it, rather than attempting to accommodate both identities and thus destroy himself in the process. Aquila leaves the actual decision up to Halsyon, asking him, '"The reality of dreams or the dreams of reality?".' However, as with 'Hobson's Choice', the reader is left unaware of Halsyon's decision. All he says is, '"I'll take it the hard way"' (Bester, '5,271,009', pp. 89, 90). As the story implies, everyone has fantasies and ways of dealing with the self mentally and socially and, as such, the choice inevitably varies from individual to individual. Whatever choice the reader imagines Halsyon to have made is no more or less accurate than what Bester could have written. Halsyon making a choice at all demonstrates that he has taken control of himself and reconciled whichever version of his self he deems to be the most effective. Which self is deemed the more difficult depends on the individual, thus leaving the reader to question which choice they would make. Given they do not have Halsyon's decision on which to base their own, readers are therefore encouraged to consider their own selves and psychology.

'5,271,009' begins exploring psychological awareness both within its characters and the story as a whole, as well as continuing reader interaction with the story by encouraging them to supply their own sense of an ending. Bester continues to develop an exploration of self-awareness through psychology by examining the split self and the continuing effect of identity crisis on the individual, which is utilised and understood throughout the work rather than being revealed at the end. The struggle between Halsyon's two halves as well as the demonstration of the conflict between individuality and conformity emphasises the importance of an authentic self and the use of psychology in maintaining it. Bester achieves this demonstration by interlacing the story with references and concepts which can be found in the reality outside the narrative. By using that reality to, in turn, inform the story, Bester is able to examine the interplay between the narrative reality and real-world reality. This allows for consideration of these discussions beyond the work itself and encourages a particular form of 'reader response' based around psychology and self-identity.

III.

These themes are continued in 'Fondly Fahrenheit' (*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, August 1954), which further demonstrates the characters' growing understanding of the difficulty of maintaining the self despite internal and external forces.[60] Particularly seen through the examination of transference within the story, the suppression of the self is explored via the struggle between individualism and collectivism. This struggle is examined through the confusion of the self indicated by the fluidity and interchangeability of the first person 'I'. James Vandaleur's identity crisis is demonstrated by this fluidity as he fails to recognise his own split mentality and the merging of his identity with that of his android's.

Bester considers this work to be an example of one of his strongest patterns, the heat-death-compulsion, which can be seen in the supposed relationship between temperature and the compulsion to kill within the story.[61] Based around ideas of psychiatric projection, the story deals with ways in which '*disturbed people attribute their own strange behavior to others*'. Due to the fluidity of self within the story and the confusion of identity, it becomes difficult to attribute this disturbance to one character or another until the end of the narrative. Bester clarifies the self externally from the work by explaining in his comments on it that the master (Vandaleur) is the criminal and that '*The master unconsciously but actually imposes his own insanity on the slave*'.[62] Telling the story from multiple viewpoints furthers this confusion of self. The narrative perspective switches, often multiple times within the same sentence, between omniscient narrator, Vandaleur, and the android, with these shifting viewpoints reflecting the shifting identities.

The story immediately introduces the reader to this narrative style and identity fluidity, with the danger of transference demonstrated through references to collectivism and conformity.

> He doesn't know which of us I am these days, but they know one truth. You must own nothing but yourself. You must make your own

[60] Alfred Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 91-111. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[61] Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit [introduction]', p. 46. Bester uses a similar concept to discuss writing the story as he claims the realisation that he could write the story from multiple viewpoints was 'the ignition point' that set off the 'fever' to write. Alfred Bester, 'Comment on Fondly Fahrenheit', in *Starlight*, pp. 66-68 (p. 68).
[62] Bester, 'Comment on Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 68. Author's own emphasis.

> life, live your own life and die your own death . . . or else you will die another's.
>
> (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 91)

A confused identity underpins a misunderstood self, which allows that self to be subsumed, and thus controlled, by others. The android's comment that '"Sometimes [...] it is a good thing to be property"' implies that ownership can be useful as the one owned has the comfortability of knowing one's place (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 102). William H. Whyte, Jr. attributes the comfortable nature of conformity to the 'good sense' involved in 'the sheer instinct of survival' which encourages a group-mindedness 'dictated by necessity'.[63] However, due to this ownership, the android is forced to live out Vandaleur's insanity, thus neither living its own life nor dying its own death. For Vandaleur's insanity to be transferred to a machine demonstrates not only the strength of the human psyche but suggests the automaton tendencies of conformity.

Alongside the fluidity of pronouns, the merging of identities can be seen in the discussions of projection. Nan Webb explains that '"Projection […] is the process of throwing out upon another the ideas or impulses that belong to oneself"' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 107). Projection is said to essentially be a 'defense mechanism' and is often associated with paranoia. Anna Freud explains that 'As soon as psychic differentiation between the self and the surrounding world […] has taken place, unpleasant elements of the inner life can be displaced into the outer world'.[64] Projection is therefore the internal made external but the move from one position to another does not indicate coexistence but a self split between the two.

In a work designed to demonstrate that mental illness is created through this tension between an individual's multiple personas, the private and the presented self, R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self* (1960) similarly considers attempting to divorce the self from oneself by projection to be a means of self-defence. However, this 'false-self', the self one perceives in order to avoid their true self, 'can be regarded as an

[63] Whyte, Jr., p. 393.
[64] Anna Freud, 'Introduction [The Concept of Repression]', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 519-21 (p. 521); Anna Freud, 'Introduction [Symptom-Formation]', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 537-38 (p. 538); Freud, 'Introduction [The Concept of Repression]', p. 521.

alien presence or person in possession of the individual'.[65] Possession can be seen in the level of control Vandaleur's projection has over his android and Bester's own dichotomy of master and slave. Vandaleur, in perceiving his android to be the murderer, believes it to be having a negative effect on his psyche. Vandaleur's unawareness of his crisis causes him to misunderstand its origin.

This is proposed near the end of the story after Vandaleur's MA android is destroyed. Soon after, Vandaleur buys a new android which shortly begins to show similar symptoms. The common denominator is thus Vandaleur himself, thereby indicating with some level of conviction that he is the one with the deranged self. As Nan Webb had informed Vandaleur, '"If you live with a psychotic who projects his sickness upon you, there is a danger of falling into his psychotic pattern and becoming virtually psychotic yourself."' Bester repeats this concept using mixed pronouns to emphasise this danger and the confusion of self to which it can lead: 'If you live with a crazy man or a crazy machine long enough, I become crazy too' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', pp. 107, 110). The fluctuating pronouns show a lack of concern for which self is expressing this idea, thereby indicating not only the merging of identities but the steady decline of the self as the 'I' no longer has any meaning.

The self is thus both unified and isolated in the story through this use of pronouns. 'I' is still indicative of a singular individual, but the collective use of the same 'I' results in unification. As Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz writes, 'the division of the sentence imitates the split personality of the first-person narrator […] thereby making evident the android's function as a *doppelgaenger.*'[66] The use of projection in order to achieve this demonstrates the danger of unknowingly projecting the self externally, as it not only damages the self, but damages the self of others. For one identity to be shared between two entities implies that whatever identity the second entity (the android) originally had, no longer exists, due to being supplanted by a foreign self. Puschmann-Nalenz comments that the android and Vandaleur are 'in reality halves of the same identity'.[67] Thus, the propagation of Vandaleur's identity

[65] R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), p. 168.
[66] Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, *Science Fiction and Postmodern Fiction: A Genre Study* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 143. Author's own emphasis.
[67] Puschmann-Nalenz, p. 143.

has erased the android's identity, furthering ideas of conformity, projection, and ownership of another's self.

Just as Aquila's speech helps to individualise him, Vandaleur's speech helps to unify him, as he becomes both 'I' and 'he', even to himself. A merging of his internal and external self results mainly through his inability to connect his mental self to his physical self, as it is shared between multiple individuals through projection. Vandaleur no longer participates in his own identity and this change from a concrete 'I' to an abstract 'us' indicates a loss of individuality, while projection, originally a defence mechanism, has reinforced his identity crisis.

As a result of Vandaleur's identity crisis being conveyed over multiple individuals rather than just split internally, he is the first of Bester's protagonists to remain unreconciled, ending the story still with a split self. Laing writes that 'the false-self system becomes enemy-occupied territory, felt to be controlled and directed by an alien, hostile, a destructive agency'.[68] This feeling of being controlled by an alien force could explain Vandaleur's confusion over who is projecting onto whom, as his perception of being controlled by an external force meant an ignorance of its internal origins.[69] Laing explains that this constant fight between the internal and external, while an attempt to preserve, actually only helps to destroy. The internal self remains isolated 'as a defence against the dangers from without which are felt as a threat to its identity' and, as a result, 'it loses what precarious identity it already has.'[70] As such, reconciliation rather than isolation would aid in preventing the split self.

'Fondly Fahrenheit' demonstrates the perceived negative impact of merging the self with the external, but a harmonious existence in which influence does not presume to usurp the self already in place would prevent this conflict. Pushmann-Nalenz believes that 'The relation between the SF-protagonist and his social environment leads from participation to isolation (either geographically or by deviant behaviour) and back to reintegration in the old or the creation of a new social

[68] Laing, p. 168.
[69] This discussion is reminiscent of Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* (1951) and the exploration of the literal puppeteering of the self by aliens. Martha A. Bartter sees the text as 'Heinlein's representation of the cold war, a struggle for men's minds'. Martha A. Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), p. 195; Robert Heinlein, *The Puppet Masters* (London: Pan Books, 1969).
[70] Laing, p. 141.

pattern'.[71] Reintegrating into a new social pattern indicates the social responsibility Bester often encourages his characters to have while coexisting with society rather than being subsumed by conformity. This new social pattern then replaces the old social pattern through a reconciliation of self which eliminates the isolated or split self.

The concept of being separate but together, as an individual within a collective, highlights the struggle between an internal sense of self and the external realisation of that self. The loss of identity through conformity contributes to the merged self examined in the story. Mark Jancovich writes that 'mass conformity and the repression of difference and dissent destroy[s] the quality of human life'.[72] This is seen throughout the story as Vandaleur's loss of individuality equates a descent into madness. Additionally, automaton conformity is represented through the use of androids and merged identities, implying the destruction of the human in favour of the machine, which is later further explored in 'The Die-Hard' (1958).[73]

Furthermore, conformity can be seen in the men searching for Vandaleur and his android on Paragon III. The men can be seen as a hive-mind with their replication of equipment and the idea that they were 'all speaking to all' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 92). The multitudes of them indicate the repetition of this type as well as establishing the military and government as potential origin points for contemporary conformity. Susan A. George writes that in the 'battle between the values of the individualist and the perceived virtues of conformity, the team player emerges as the victor'. The portrayal of the military as a hive-mind exemplifies this concept of the team player and encourages the suppression of the self within the group. George further claims that 'With the rise of the team player as the preferred cultural archetype, […] the notion of individualism itself, became more suspect'.[74] This desire for team players as an insurance against individualism can be seen within the story through social anxieties regarding the automation of the workforce.

When Dallas Brady encourages Vandaleur to give up his android and seek work himself, Vandaleur explains that he has no skills to compete in the current job

[71] Puschmann-Nalenz, p. 98.
[72] Mark Jancovich, *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 112.
[73] Alfred Bester, 'The Die-Hard', in *Starburst* (New York, NY: New American Library of World Literature, 1958), pp. 148-52.
[74] Susan A. George, *Gendering Science Fiction Films: Invaders From the Suburbs* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2013), pp. 44, 13.

market. '"You know I'm good for nothing. How could I compete with specialist androids and robots? Who can, unless he's got a terrific talent for a particular job?"' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 96). Bill Brown writes that the minimisation of the human in the workforce by robots and automated devices challenged 'the human right to labor', suggesting the obsolescence of the human. Additionally, George suggests that tension in the 1950s was increased due to the workforce moving from manufacturing (implying conformed assembly lines) to corporate jobs, indicating a separation between automatons and specialists.[75] Thus, society is defined by these two aspects, leaving little room for individuals to maintain their identity beyond these descriptors.[76]

The subjugation of the individual can be seen in the interaction between the government and Vandaleur's android. When on the run in the marshes of England, Vandaleur gives his android the command to keep driving. However, the authorities attempt to override this command by speaking directly to the android and commanding it to stop regardless of private commands (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 108). Government authority is asserted over the individual and demonstrates the supersession of the individual. The android is programmed to follow these commands, and thus is torn between his programmed directives and the force of Vandaleur's psyche upon its actions. Vandaleur claims that there is no one to submit to, implying an unwillingness to recognise governmental authority, and emphasises the solipsistic state his identity has entered.

Additionally, Vandaleur claims that, without credentials, they have no way of knowing whether the authorities are who they say they are. Paperwork as proof of identity is further seen in the care Vandaleur takes in having his android craft new identification papers when he need to mask his true identity by assuming another. Vandaleur's comment that having the papers made both creates and destroys go beyond just the papers themselves and indicates a recognition of the association between identification papers and identity. Vandaleur is literally crafting a new self

[75] Bill Brown, 'Prelude: The Obsolescence of the Human', in *Cultures of Obsolescence: History, Materiality, and the Digital Age*, ed. by Babette B. Tischleder and Sarah Wasserman (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2015), pp. 19-38 (p. 34); George, p. 13.

[76] For further literary considerations of this theme, see Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, intro. by Jonathan Franzen (London: Penguin Books, 2005). The protagonist's consideration of the gray flannel suit as the 'uniform of the day' indicates workforce conformity. The novel as a whole examines the suburban lifestyle and concept of the organisation man. Wilson, *Gray Flannel Suit*, p. 8.

through paperwork and destroying his previous identity by destroying old paperwork (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', pp. 109, 95).

Repeatedly changing his identity, which, while understandable as he is wanted for murder, further encourages his split identity. In addition, he consistently chooses new identities which are different enough from his own name, but similar enough that the common denominator between his authentic self and false self is easily noticeable. Each of Vandaleur's new identities uses his real first name, James, while all his surnames begin with 'V'. This similarity may have helped remind Vandaleur of his authentic self if not for the combination of his authentic forename with a false surname, emphasising the split within his self and signifying the merging of multiple identities.

Identification, through paperwork, is more for individuals to externally understand one another rather than to understand the self. However, the self's reflection in the external means that identifying another may aid in personal identification. Exposing differences enables the individual to compare the self and 'other' in order to determine aspects of identification. For example, though both humans and androids bleed in the story, android blood does not clot. Thus, an internal aspect of the android is made external and then used in comparison to the human self in order to distinguish identity. The authorities are then capable of learning the identity of the murderer as well as separating the human and android identity.

Even the android, with its internal self programmed by external humans, is aware of its identity and makes a point of separating itself from others. When Vandaleur calls it a machine, it responds by saying, '"I am not a machine[...]. The robot is a machine. The android is a chemical creation of synthetic tissue"' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 94). The android is thus identified through its dissimilarity to another. The created self echoes considerations of the self as partially determined through external influences. The android as literally made by others exemplifies this concept. One of the men searching for Vandaleur and his android comments that the android must have been made wrong, which questions whether people can be 'made' wrong as well. This signifies concerns over psychological disorders as well as

previous considerations of Locke's 'tabula rasa' and whether the accumulation of experiences can negatively affect a self.[77]

Reflecting the self externally is additionally examined through Vandaleur's self-perception and his ignorance regarding the nature of his relationship with his android. The mixed pronouns and confusion over identity demonstrates Vandaleur's subconscious lack of awareness while the narrative style externally demonstrates it. When Brady guesses Vandaleur's real name, his automatic response is that she is correct. Vandaleur's use of masks demonstrates an attempt to escape his authentic self but his inability to fool Brady shows his failure to escape his authentic self and its related identity crisis.

Vandaleur's self-awareness is often unconsciously displayed through the specific placement of mixed pronouns. In looking through the newspapers which hold a clue to the android's activities, Vandaleur and Blenheim are said to be searching for something that would account for 'my derangement' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 104). Due to both the merged identities and the confusion over pronouns, it does not particularly matter whether it is Vandaleur or the android speaking as what can be attributed to one can be attributed to the other. As a result, this comment could be Vandaleur's unconscious recognition of his mental disorder.

Furthermore, this is seen in conversations between Vandaleur and the android in which whom the 'I' belongs to is no longer relevant. '"Why did you kill her?" I asked. "I don't know," I answered' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 94). The 'I' answering the 'I' creates the perception that Vandaleur is speaking to himself. Vandaleur's imposition of his identity on his android makes the android essentially a copy of himself, meaning that, for over two years, he has basically been speaking to 'himself'. Vandaleur's inability to know himself or take control of his actions is implied here. This lack of knowledge is revisited when a group of students studying the killings begin to question whether Vandaleur's android is the one responsible. Vandaleur has obscured the mark on its forehead identifying it as an MA android, causing the students to question whether it is the 'right' android. The obscuring of the mark further merges the two identities as it decreases their external differences

[77] See Sigmund Freud's, 'Neurosis and Psychosis', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 563-67 for an extensive consideration of mental abnormality created through the self's interactions with reality.

and echoes Vandaleur's acquisition of identities to use as masks, as the alteration of the android's face is a literal utilisation of a type of mask.

When Vandaleur begins to perform the murders instead of his android, he refers to it as self-preservation, moving from relatively passive defence mechanisms to active ones. Once Vandaleur takes over the killing, there is a direct example of their identities merging. Realising Blenheim has guessed that they are the murderers, Vandaleur commands the android to kill Blenheim. 'A silent lunatic command passed from man to android' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 105). The use of the word 'lunatic' characterises both individuals as does the ability to silently converse with one another, emphasising the extent to which they have mentally merged. This incident can also be seen as a symbolic occurrence representing the entirety of Vandaleur's projection, as he has been passing on lunatic thoughts to his android for years.

Vandaleur being shown as the violent one emphasises him as the cause of the sickness and indicates what the android has repeated throughout the story; that its prime directive is to not 'endanger life or property' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 102).[78] This directive should have indicated to Vandaleur that it could not be the android that was deranged. It also demonstrates the power of Vandaleur's projection that the android could override this prime directive. Vandaleur's final descent into his identity crisis, both internally through confusion of identity and now externally through committing the murders himself, draws a fine line between criminal and patient. Webb proclaims: '"you […] are so obviously infected by association with your deranged android […] that I hesitate between calling the Metropolitan Police and the Hospital for the Criminally Insane"' (Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', p. 107). Webb's dialogue recalls Reich's confinement in a hospital and his demolition parallels that of imprisonment through the mental confinement of the self. Fiona Kelleghan comments that 'Bester's hospitals are thinly disguised prisons', which is also seen with Halsyon's stay in a mental hospital. Similar to these other works, Webb also easily interchanges the two institutions. This fluctuation indicates that 'Even when a character is not a criminal, his difference from others is often enough to lock him away'. However, the relationship between the two institutions also

[78] This echoes Isaac Asimov's Laws of Robotics. See Isaac Asimov, 'Runaround', *Astounding Science Fiction*, vol. 29, no. 1, March 1942, pp. 94-103.

indicates that the mind can be a form of self-imprisonment wherein the conscious mind is imprisoned by obsessive compulsions.[79]

'Fondly Fahrenheit' also indicates themes which would be revisited in later works, specifically *The Stars My Destination*. The mark on the android's forehead as a feature of its identity can be seen as a precursor to Gully Foyle's NOMAD tattoo and attempts to obscure it in order to obscure identity. 'Fondly Fahrenheit' also briefly touches upon considerations of synaesthesia in the form of temperature as a trigger to impulses, which has a greater role in *The Stars My Destination*. Bester's reuse of these story elements throughout varying situations, plots, and characters emphasises the repetitive nature of these identity issues across humanity, indicating the growing recognition of the universality of psychology.

The implications of violence's connection with both expression and repression of the individual echoes previous considerations of *Sturm und Drang* and further explores the struggle between the self and adequate, authentic representation. Bester's approach to the resolution of the identity crisis can be seen in comparing his fictional output of 1954. '5,271,009' results in a reconciliation of the self through psychological understanding, while 'Fondly Fahrenheit' results in a continuation of the split identity through misunderstanding of the origin of the split and a refusal on Vandaleur's part to recognise his own compulsions. When considered alongside one another, these two works lay out the positive and negative results of whether the split self is resolved or not.

Both these fictions utilise a feedback loop of identity by examining the philosophical and metaphysical underpinnings of identity. This approach to identity can similarly be seen in the work of Philip K. Dick, such as 'The Minority Report' (1956), which raises similar questions concerning subjugation of the self and individual autonomy in the face of automated governmental control.[80] Indicating that Bester was not alone in his explorations, these analogous approaches to Cold War anxieties indicate that the state of identity within society was a notable concern. Bester therefore not only interacts with his readers and society, but other authors within the field by examining concerns within the genre regarding confusion and anxiety towards the self.

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[79] Fiona Kelleghan, 'Hell's My Destination: Imprisonment in the Works of Alfred Bester', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Nov. 1994), 351-64 (pp. 356, 352).
[80] Philip K. Dick, 'The Minority Report', *Fantastic Universe*, vol. 4, no. 6, January 1956, pp. 4-36.

IV.

In 1955, Bester's output of fiction momentarily ceased, though he continued to maintain a presence in magazine publications. In February of 1955, he published a guest editorial in *Science Fantasy*, entitled 'What's the Difference?'.[81] In it, Bester compares British and American science fiction, though the thoughts conveyed can be understood in a wider context. Bester writes that the way fiction is written reflects the tastes of the fan. Fans in turn reflect their culture, thus demonstrating a direct link between contemporary society and works of fiction.[82] William Darby refers to bestselling fiction as a 'barometer for a culture', in which 'popular media serve as weathervanes recording shifts in value and mood in the culture at large'.[83] As such, the relationship between Bester's work and society can be used to understand Bester's use of psychology and identity crises as a reflection of the Cold War.

This relation between the Cold War and the individual can be seen in Bester's description of contemporary Americans. Bester refers to Americans as 'nervous, high-strung people, anxious, insecure, generous but confused' and 'tense and excitable'.[84] Bester claims that these traits can be attributed to one's social environment as a reflection of wider emotions. The nervous state of Americans could therefore be attributed to the anxious state of society due to the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and the after-effects of McCarthyism.[85] Nuclear weaponry is expressed in this editorial as an accepted 'natural order of things' within America. This echoes the acceptance of war and its consequences often seen in Bester's writing in which the focus is on attempts to escape from reality rather than prevent the negative reality from occurring.[86]

Despite these concerns, the editorial champions the differences between American and British science fiction and the more general differences between the

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[81] Alfred Bester, 'What's the Difference?', *Science Fantasy*, vol. 4, no. 12, February 1955, pp. 2-5.
[82] Bester, 'What's the Difference?', pp. 3, 5.
[83] William Darby, *Necessary Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), pp. 1, 2.
[84] Bester, 'What's the Difference?', p. 3.
[85] Stephen J. Whitfield considers the 1950s to be arguably the worst decade for paranoia. Stephen J. Whitfield, 'The culture of the Cold War', in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture*, ed. by Christopher Bigsby (2006), pp. 256-74 (p. 272) <http://dx.doi.org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1017/CCOL0521841321.013>.
[86] Bester, 'What's the Difference?', p. 3.

cultures and societies of each nation. Bester would have been living in England while writing this editorial and so would have been able to experience first-hand the differences between the two countries. He asks, 'What's the difference if we're different?.' Though directed towards US versus UK sf, this could be seen as a general statement in regards to the 'other'. Bester writes that 'We are different, and so long as we remain different we shall both be the better for it'.[87] Differences are thus seen as advantageous, as with the barn dances in *Who He?*. If accepted, differences would disallow conformity and enable individuals to forego the use of masks. As a result, the danger of identity crises would be minimised.

Allowing for differences would also forego the paranoia and anxiety involved in things such as McCarthyism and permit society to be more encouraging to individual psychology. Martha A. Bartter writes that 'Before people can really find peace with each other […] they have to find peace within themselves', which she elaborates on by explaining that 'improved communication, both with other humans and with the "self", leads to psychological release from the fixation with "bad" feelings and fear'.[88] Self-reconciliation would thus aid in social reconciliation, which can be seen in *The Stars My Destination* with Gully Foyle's personal reconciliation coinciding with his understanding regarding social responsibility.

Bester's editorial further discusses maintaining differences in order to encourage one's sense of self and mental reconciliation of the conscious and unconscious. Bester writes that he could not 'advocate anything that smacked of sameness, imitation, loss of individuality'. The importance of the self can be seen in the discussion of individuality within his works as well as the potential dangers he predicts would result from conformity, masks, psychological splits, and so on. Bester also refers to science fiction as 'the expression of these turbulent times', again asserting that fiction reflects society, thus drawing a parallel between the psychological aspects of his work and their importance in contemporary society.[89]

The reflection of this editorial in Bester's own work emphasises the importance which Bester has placed on these themes. By using an editorial to espouse ideas commonly found in his fiction, Bester uses non-fiction to approach the same audience (readers of sf magazines) in a different way. The reflective nature of

[87] Bester, 'What's the Difference?', p. 5.
[88] Bartter, *The Way to Ground Zero*, pp. 164, 196.
[89] Bester, 'What's the Difference?', p. 5.

the fiction encourages an understanding of the contemporary Cold War in terms of the self and its place in society as well as the psychological emotions present in maintaining the self in a milieu perceived to be replete with paranoid conformity.

Bester's other non-fiction publication of 1955 was a letter to *New Worlds Science Fiction* on the topic of censorship.[90] Bester claims that the limits of censorship and its impact reflect the spirit of the times, just as man reflects his culture, and thus so does fiction. In this case, the absence of aspects of fiction also reflect both culture and man. Censorship returns to the concept of the blacklist within the entertainment industry and the paranoia regarding Communists echoes the ability of censorship to prevent the public from being exposed to certain views or concepts.

Censorship can also lead to conformity and considering the place of conformity within Bester's work, it is evident why he would speak out against it to protect the significance of the individual. Bester calls censorship '*Weltanschauung'*, indicating that it is a reflection of its time and underscoring the conformed view of the world inherent in censorship.[91] Individuals influenced by their external world to encourage similar views in others help instil conformity and underpin ideas of 'groupthink'. The 'unwillingness to challenge group consensus' leads to what Irving Janis refers to as 'group madness'. Janis writes that a socially prescribed world view becomes more considerable 'in circumstances of extreme crisis' and that 'instances of mindless conformity and collective misjudgment of serious risk' becomes much more frequent.[92] In the Cold War, the potential for nuclear holocaust surely induced an 'extreme crisis' while the misjudgement of serious risk echoes previous considerations of nuclear fission as well-intentioned but ill-advised. As such, this encouragement of groupthink is a defensive measure that is as potentially dangerous as any other discussed in Bester's work (e.g. transference, projection, fugue states).

Bester writes that the conflict between editor and public is more important and significant than any other extrapolation science fiction could offer as it encourages the fighting of censorship, and thus the fighting of conformity. Bester considers the reflection of modern man in sf to be required in order to fight

[90] Alfred Bester, 'Letter', *New Worlds Science Fiction*, vol. 11, no. 33, March 1955, p. 127.
[91] 'Weltanschauung, n.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/227763?redirectedFrom=weltanschauung#eid> [accessed 19 July 2015].
[92] 'groupthink, n.', in *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/81855> [accessed 3 May 2016]; Irving Janis, 'Victims of Groupthink', in *Approaches to Peace*, pp. 30-35 (p. 31).

censorship. By enabling extrapolation of the effects of censorship in the long-term, it encourages focus on the concrete individual which Bester regards as more significant than social considerations such as religion or sex.[93] The idea that sf is meant to always reflect man 'in genuine human conflict' echoes 'The Trematode' in opinion, showing Bester's continued thoughts on the role of the individual within science fiction and the importance of the self within society.

Though these years were relatively sparse compared to Bester's output during the rest of the decade, his work on *The Stars My Destination* and the continuation of common themes through both his fiction and non-fiction reflect his concerns in both halves of the decade. Bester's dedication to Freudian psychology and concerns of the split self during this period thus does not diminish despite his lessened contribution to the field. Rather, these interim years serve to show the development of Bester's approach to his commonly used themes and indicates his short stories as testing grounds for concepts later expanded through his novels.

[93] Bester, 'Letter', p. 127.

4. '[W]e all betray ourselves': Voluntary duality of the self? – 1956

I.

Published in the UK as *Tiger! Tiger!* (1956) before being serialised in *Galaxy Science Fiction* from October 1956 through January 1957, *The Stars My Destination* was published in the United States under its serialised title in March 1957.[1] In 1956, P. Schuyler Miller reviewed *Tiger! Tiger!* in *Astounding Science Fiction* (August 1956).[2] He refers to the novel as 'a strange story of vengeance' and 'A fantastic collection of characters and remarkable situations', ultimately referring to it as 'a memorable SF book'.[3] Miller later published an extended review of *The Stars My Destination* based on its serial publication in *Galaxy* (*Astounding*, November 1957, March 1958 [UK]).[4] In it, Miller comments that, while a top-ranking text, it does not compare to Bester's first science fiction novel, though a second reading of the novel did raise his initial approval.

Miller comments on Gulliver Foyle's relation to society by writing that '[Foyle] is the mad-dog product of a mad-dog culture, impelled to his inevitable end by Furies as relentless as any that ever haunted the Greeks'.[5] Foyle's compulsion for vengeance and the influence of culture emphasises the differences between Foyle's stages of self and the role it plays in regards to the feedback nature of the self and society. The inevitability of Foyle's end is perhaps debatable as Foyle often appears to be reverting to old habits and old selves. The requirement for an external impetus to keep him moral, in the form of the Burning Man, underscores the intertwined nature of his id and ego as well as the impact of external factors on his internal self, since, as a manifestation of Foyle's conscience, it both possesses, and is possessed by, him.

Miller also raises an interesting point in his review in regards to the work and its publication. He questions 'why a book like this should be limited to a paperback

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[1] Alfred Bester, *Tiger! Tiger!* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967; repr. 1974); Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, ed. by Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).
[2] P. Schuyler Miller, 'Review: *Tiger! Tiger!*', *Astounding Science Fiction*, vol. 12, no. 8, August 1956, pp. 128.
[3] Miller, 'Review: *Tiger! Tiger!*', p. 128.
[4] P. Schuyler Miller, 'Review: *The Stars My Destination*', *Astounding Science Fiction*, vol. 14, no. 3, March 1958, pp. 124-25.
[5] Miller, 'Review: *The Stars My Destination*', p. 125.

edition, in view of some of the things out in hard covers'.[6] Miller's implications regarding what is 'good enough' for hardback echoes earlier considerations regarding sf's increasing relationship with the mainstream. Reprints were reserved for novels considered capable of making enough money to justify the expenditure.

Considering the guiding public morality of bestsellers, reprints were likely reserved for novels most in-line with contemporary thought. William Darby concedes that bestseller lists were censored in the 1950s due to demands of public morality.[7] Malcolm Cowley explains that, in order for publishers to justify reprints, 'The novel must have characters with whom the reader can identify himself.' However, the desire for literature to reaffirm national values meant that literary characters, in order to reflect real-life individuals, must maintain these national values as well. Thus, despite any actual diversity amongst literature and its readership, texts which reflected these values were more likely to be reprinted.[8] Darby writes that bestsellers of the 1950s 'extoll middle-class and melodramatic manners and morals' and are more likely to follow the everyday drama akin to a soap opera than the far-reaching considerations Bester deemed worthy of sf.[9]

The decisions behind reprints and the censorship of bestseller lists underscores the pervading conformity of the time. Though mass produced, cheap paperbacks were enabling a wide-read American society, only those works considered socially acceptable were widely available, allowing for increased choice in terms of number but limited choice in terms of thoughts and ideas.[10] Bester also comments on the state of hardback publishing by declaring that 'Our admiration for [Robert] Scheckley is so profound that we regret his publication in soft-cover. He deserves fine binding and an honored place on all bookshelves'.[11] Linking quality with binding implies the prestige associated with hardbacks and indicates that reprints signify success or value. Despite efforts by presses such as Arkham House, hardcover was a difficult expenditure to convince publishing houses to undergo. Arkham's ability to sell a hardcover collection of H. P. Lovecraft's works

[6] Miller, 'Review: *The Stars My Destination*', p. 125.
[7] William Darby, *Necessary Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), p. 4.
[8] Malcolm Cowley, *The Literary Situation* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1961), p. 112.
[9] Darby, pp. 3, 2.
[10] Cowley, p. 112.
[11] Alfred Bester, 'Books', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 5, November 1960, pp. 90-93 (p. 92).

underscores the genre separation between specialist small presses and larger publishing houses.[12] Though Miller's comment was likely more of a lament at the publishing reception of Bester's novel than any critique of wider society, the comment does indicate the industry Bester was writing in and the general atmosphere of the reality whose future he extrapolates throughout his works.

Leslie Flood further praises the novel in a review published August 1956 in *New Worlds Science Fiction*, for which he was a regular sf reviewer from June 1954 to April 1964.[13] Flood refers to Bester as a writer of great power and ingenuity with *The Stars My Destination* as an even better book than *The Demolished Man*.[14] However, Flood equally criticises and praises *The Stars My Destination* by saying the work is a 'slightly tarnished masterpiece'.[15] He credits this to the slightly overwhelming nature of the work and the result of Bester's attempt to perhaps write 'the' psi novel. Flood considers Bester to have a strong use of 'literary shock tactics', perhaps responsible for the overwhelming nature of the work.

However, Flood considers the world-building to be plausible with an 'ingeniously detailed background' and a 'powerful' central character. Flood's assessment of the 'mental torture' and 'amoral characters' reflects Bester's interest in, and exploration of, psychology whereas Bester's 'dramatic sentences' can perhaps be traced to his time spent in comic books. Flood also praises the fluidity of Foyle's character, which lends itself to the discussion on psychology and conformity by producing 'remarkable' and 'incredible' transformations.[16]

Flood's assertion that the moral of the story is man's self-destructive nature indicates Bester's use of his contemporary political state in order to examine the destructive nature of man's inventions. However, Flood's review does not relate this concept to the contemporary Cold War, thus ignoring PyrE's connection to nuclear weapons. Overall, Flood writes of his criticism, 'But this is rather unfair, because

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[12] Peter Nicholls, and Malcolm Edwards, 'Arkham House', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, ed. by John Clute and others (5 Aug. 2015) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/arkham_house> [accessed 21 December 2015]. See S. T. Joshi, *Sixty Years of Arkham House* (Sauk City, Wisconsin: Arkham House, 1999).
[13] Leslie Flood, 'Review: *Tiger! Tiger!*', *New Worlds Science Fiction*, vol. 17, no. 50, 1956, pp. 126-28; David Langford, 'Flood, Leslie', in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (4 July 2014) <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/flood_leslie> [accessed 17 February 2015].
[14] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man*, intro. by Harry Harrison (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).
[15] Flood, p. 126.
[16] Flood, pp. 126, 127.

Tiger! Tiger! is pure Bester, and as such must surely take its place among the top ten science-fiction novels of all time.'[17]

Generally, despite any narrative drawbacks, *The Stars My Destination* continues Bester's approach to identity and further examines fundamental aspects of society and literature. The duality of the self, especially in regards to the Cold War psyche and collective neurotic nature of the psychological response to the situation, is both seen in this novel and in the work of his contemporaries. Bester's attempts to utilise these concepts in regards to individual identity indicates his position within this literary atmosphere and reflects Miller's and Flood's comments regarding the characterisation within the novel. Continuing themes found previously in Bester's work, the novel portrays Bester's own progression of self through his development of these concepts and approach to individualism throughout the decade.

II.

The Stars My Destination revisits what Bester began to investigate in 'Fondly Fahrenheit'.[18] By expanding the consideration of multiple identities to include deliberate utilisation of layers of the self, Bester is able to explore how these layers can be repressed and/or revealed. The novel's protagonist, Gulliver Foyle, represents the embodiment of multiple selves but is envisioned from a new angle than Bester's previous work. Foyle exemplifies the self-made, socially imposed dualism often found in 1950s' culture between the public and private selves. The contrast between cultural narratives and personal narratives caused the personal self to be marked as 'other' through 'its internalized sense of aberrance and contradiction'.[19] The internalised self contributes to this self-made duality by creating a self at odds with society through its internalisation. *The Stars My Destination* underscores the separation that can be found between the self constrained by social conformity and the self one has the potential to be. Walter Shear claims that 'conforming citizens are

[17] Flood, p. 128.
[18] Alfred Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 91-111.
[19] Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 298.

in their conformity other than they could be', reflecting considerations that Foyle, and others, have unharnessed potential suppressed by a conformed nature.[20]

The Stars My Destination cements together ideas explored through Bester's previous works by combining the lack of self-knowledge and psychology found in *The Demolished Man* with the examination of multiple selves in 'Fondly Fahrenheit'. This is then overlaid with implications of psychic numbing, similar to 'Hobson's Choice', and explorations of masks and social pressures as found in *Who He?*.[21] This convergence of themes allows for a thorough exploration into the duality of the self and whether it is intentional or socially enforced. As a result, the novel questions whether a dual self can be anything but socially influenced or controlled.

Foyle represses his identity in response to the low expectations of society and, only when confronted by an external disregard for his life, is he pushed to realise his own potential. Foyle's changes are thus prompted by external factors but the change itself remains internal. Self and society are thus demonstrated to require an interchange which the novel portrays through the coinciding of social responsibility and personal self. Foyle's entry in the official Merchant Marine records recognises his possible potential but, rather than encouraging it, simply states that Foyle has reached a dead end. The record refers to Foyle as 'The stereotype Common Man', but acknowledges that 'Some unexpected shock might possibly awaken him, but Psych cannot find the key'.[22] This unexpected shock is Foyle's abandonment in space by the *Vorga*. Fiona Kelleghan asserts that this key imagery contrasts the 'dead end' and gives a dynamic alternative to the immobility and stasis in which Foyle was previously existing.[23] The record entry indicates an external recognition of Foyle's inner self, with Psych representing the use of an external observer in assisting self-reflection, as seen in '5,271,009'.[24]

The psychological disconnect between the social and personal emphasises the potential for the individual to be 'other' if one does not fit an expected conformed

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[20] Walter Shear, *The Feeling of Being: Sensibility in Postwar American Fiction* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 97.
[21] Alfred Bester, 'Hobson's Choice', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 112-26; Alfred Bester, *Who He?* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, [n.d.]).
[22] Bester, *The Stars My Destination* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 16. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text. The title will be abbreviated as *TSMD*.
[23] Fiona Kelleghan, 'Hell's My Destination: Imprisonment in the Works of Alfred Bester', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Nov. 1994), 351-64 (p. 353).
[24] Alfred Bester, '5,271,009', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 56-90.

image. Foyle's transition from 'Common Man' to his 'uncommon' self through the course of the novel maps this use and understanding of the layers of the self. Foyle's progression through his multiple selves (e.g. 'common man', brute, sophisticate, Fourmyle, awakened self) reflects the progression of the Cold War through various stages of self-awareness and the neuroses apparent within this societal reflection of individual mentality. Social and political transitions through McCarthysim, the Korean War, blacklisting, and the like encourages a constant rebuilding of the national identity based on political implications of the social consciousness making the novel a personal reflection of social transformation. Bester further discusses psychological reinventions of the self by exploring whether the creation of multiple selves can ever be a voluntary, wholly self-made, decision.

The intertwined nature of the social and the personal is indicated through Foyle's repeated self-realisations coupled with the repressed self. Bester utilises these themes as he often does by employing naming techniques to represent individual characters. Gulliver Foyle shares his name with the eponymous character in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).[25] Gulliver and the journey associated with the name is further played upon when Foyle is pronounced Nomad by Joseph of the Scientific People; the two names evoking similar connotations.[26] Foyle does not mentally stay in the same place for long after his initial awakening, thus giving the name further significance beyond the association Joseph makes between Foyle and his ship, *Nomad*. Foyle's change to Geoffrey Fourmyle, a name suggested to him by Saul Dagenham, demonstrates the external influence over nominal identification, while Foyle's use of it shows how far that influence has gone. The name further represents the subterfuge Foyle employs to evade his pursuers, with his circus being dubbed the Four Mile Circus, due to the fact that 'the roar of the circus could be heard for four miles, hence the nickname' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 125). The nickname is also homonymous with Fourmyle, thus furthering the connection between naming and external concepts.

Foyle's association with his ship also goes beyond sharing the name Nomad. Foyle is physically scarred with this name in the form of his tattoo, just as the name is emblazoned on the ship, thus making their connection both physical and abstract.

[25] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (London: George Newnes, 1905).
[26] 'nomad, n. and adj.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015) <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/127696?redirectedFrom=nomad#eid> [accessed 23 August 2015].

In addition, the ship both nearly kills Foyle and yet also keeps him alive. Thus, the ship operates as both saviour and destroyer, as Foyle similarly has the potential to be when he offers PyrE to mass society. As the *Nomad* physically carries the PyrE, so does Foyle mentally carry knowledge of its use, but, like the ship adrift in space, remains in stasis until it can be released. The connection between man and machine is finalised by Foyle's decision to undergo surgery in order to make him 'an extraordinary fighting machine', causing Foyle to refer to himself as 'More machine than man' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 128). This duality between man and machine echoes social machination through conformity, as seen at various points throughout the narrative and is expanded when Foyle returns to the *Nomad* at the end of the novel.

Just as the *Nomad* lends its name to themes throughout the novel, so does the *Vorga*. As Carolyn Wendell points out, it is reminiscent of Borgia and the associated ideas of brutality and murder. When Presteign refers to Foyle as looking like a Borgia, it emphasises Foyle's growing relationship with *Vorga* and his distancing from *Nomad*.[27] Each ship thus represents an aspect of Foyle's identity, one positive and one negative, with his vacillation between the two similar to his movement between living on the *Nomad* and pursuing *Vorga* for revenge.

Many women in the novel also share their names with concepts that can be used to understand their identity. Robin Wednesbury, reminiscent of 'Wednesday's child is full of woe', fulfils this name as she suffers repeated torment throughout the book, occasionally at the hands of Foyle. Foyle meets Jisbella McQueen, associated with Jezabel and wicked, manipulative power, while in prison, and she is important in re-educating Foyle in her own image to help him realise his brutish behaviour, therefore enabling his rehabilitation into his awakened self. Olivia Presteign, associated with Livia, 'a Roman emperor's wife who killed most of her own family', did kill hundreds of people aboard the *Vorga* and the initial meeting between her and Foyle amidst the dropping of bombs demonstrates the monstrous characteristics of the two.[28] Overall, the women's names reflect them as they are in relation to Foyle, for, without his connections to them, the significance of their names loses meaning, thus making the association between name and self reliant on him as an external factor.

[27] Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), p. 29.
[28] Wendell, pp. 30, 31, 33, 34

The description of Foyle's attempt to survive aboard the wrecked *Nomad* contains a multitude of contrasting images. These images are revisited throughout the novel as mirrored aspects within Foyle's identity. Described as being 'one hundred and seventy days dying and not yet dead', Foyle is further referred to as being 'among the least valuable alive and most likely to survive' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 15, 16). This wavering between alive and dead is later revisited through Foyle's realisation of identity, the Skopsty sect, and the suspended animation he enters at the end of the novel. Foyle being 'least valuable' echoes his Merchant Marines description, though him being 'most likely to survive' parallels the potential it mentions as well. By surviving, Foyle has already exhibited more ambition than expected of him, which grows through the course of the novel.

Further, Foyle is said to have 'prayed in blasphemy' while existing in a 'lightless coffin'. While this view of prayer reflects a twenty-fifth century which 'had abolished organized religion', the coffin imagery furthers the contrast of being alive in death (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 16, 17, 145).[29] Revisited when Foyle escapes from the darkness of the prison Gouffre Martel, these instances are an occasion of rebirth envisioned through an escape from womb-like death. The imprisonment of the physical self coupled with the imprisonment of the mind mirrors Bester's repeated positioning of Foyle's physical self in confined spaces. Kelleghan refers to Bester's prisons as the location for 'psychological catalysis'. This 'rebirth' thus echoes the womb imagery commonly seen in relation to the prison-like locale.

> Those characters who undergo imprisonment may wind up with disastrous psychic damage or, conversely, may find spiritual enlightenment. In Bester's most famous stories, the characters who emerge from the darkness of imprisonment into self-illumination may grow to lead others in their society to seek their own freedom. [30]

[29] Bester writes that while religion had been abolished, God had not, indicating an attempt to remove this form of community but not the impetus behind it. Randall Bennett Woods expands the argument that many 'Americans turned to Protestantism, Catholicism, or Judaism out of a need to belong rather than from spiritual longing and conviction'. In this case, 'cellar Christians' are gathering not to belong but to deviate from the conformed norm in order to follow their beliefs. Bester utilises religion not as a conforming force but as a source of individuality in a future where religion's place in society has been reversed from its position within 1950s' culture. Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 142.
[30] Kelleghan, p. 364.

Though this specifically applies to *The Stars My Destination*, this can be found both literally and figuratively in much of Bester's work. In this novel, the figurative mirrors the literal with each of Foyle's physical freedoms occurring alongside the unlocking of some aspect of his identity and associated psyche.

The relationship between life (womb and rebirth) and death (coffin and confined darkness) can also be seen in Freudian psychology.[31] Freud writes that Eros (the life instinct and thus related to the womb through reproduction) and the death instinct struggle within the id to gain dominance over its impulses.[32] As such, the self is subconsciously continuously struggling between life and death. Adam Piette refers to the Eros and death drive instincts as dualistic and thus their representation within Foyle indicates his mental state made physical. Piette also considers these 'death-instinctual' narratives to be 'a significant feature of the imaginative work done by literary artists during the Cold War'.[33] Bester therefore shares these explorations with his literary contemporaries, though Bester is not just echoing these concepts but treating them differently through associations with identity politics.

Further implications of this connection can be found in Foyle and Jisbella's sexual intimacy following their escape from Gouffre Martel. The scene concretely merges the sexual instinct with the will to live (their desire to escape) and the death/coffin imagery of the hell-like prison itself as the womb from which they have been reborn. Jacqueline Smetak comments that 'We move toward death, or regress to the womb, [or] conflate the two' and emphasises that 'sex counters [the death instinct] by guaranteeing biological survival'.[34] Envisioning some form of escape to be required before the self can be reborn implies it must be a dynamic rebirth rather than static. This is furthered by the impetus which often accompanies these changes, such as Foyle being left for dead or the urgency of escaping the prison. In either case, Foyle may have purposefully decided to live, but not to change his identity. Foyle's revenge compulsion causes his id to dominate his ego, as Freud asserts that

[31] Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, intro. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 218-68.
[32] Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 439-78 (p. 478).
[33] Adam Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 124, 16.
[34] Jacqueline R. Smetak, 'Sex and Death in Nuclear Holocaust Literature of the 1950s', in *The Nightmare Considered: Critical Essays on Nuclear War Literature*, ed. by Nancy Anisfield (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991), pp. 15-26 (pp. 24, 21).

the blind search for satisfaction by the impulse drives is incompatible with the ego.[35] Foyle may not intentionally change his identity but any choice by him does affect his self and his social position.

When Foyle is found by Joseph and the Scientific People, he is rechristened Nomad. Though Foyle may have internally been reborn, this new name is given to him by others and is thus an externally constructed identity, indicating a disconnect between internal and external selves. The dissonance between the social and personal self leads to an unrealised identity crisis which exhibits itself more subtly than those Bester's other works, but just as insidiously. The novel's title reflects this dual nature within a single being. While the American publication shares its title with the magazine publication, and echoes the relatively uplifting end of the novel, the UK title indicates this duality. William Blake's poem 'The Tiger' reflects the duality found within God's creations and the naturalistic existence of duality.[36] If God can indulge in such duality, it can easily be imagined that man, if made in God's image, could recreate this duality within themselves or socially. The social pressures put on individuals to belong favours the 'lamb' as meek and conformed, while the 'tiger', unwilling to conform, is the more aggressive and independent individual. Neil Gaiman writes that 'The God who made the lamb also made the carnivores that prey upon it.'[37] Foyle may have been a lamb at the beginning of the novel, in terms of not asserting his innate self, but he progresses to a tiger by the end; confident and sure of his identity. Carolyn Wendell explains that 'William Blake's poem suggests one god made both creatures; Bester's novel suggests that both reside within one human being'.[38] While this could imply it to be an inherent part of man, Bester's exploration of the concept seems to imply that, while man is capable of both aspects, utilising them simultaneously would be destructive.

Foyle's change from lamb to tiger is subtly mapped throughout the novel in the form of a nursery rhyme. The jingle's progression effectively maps Foyle's journey through self-identification. As a whole, the jingle runs:

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[35] Sigmund Freud, 'The Unconscious', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 142-83 (p. 164); Anna Freud, 'Introduction [The Structure of the Psychic Personality]', in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 435-37 (p. 436).
[36] William Blake, 'The Tiger', in *Collected Poems*, ed. by W.B. Yeats, intro. by Tom Paulin, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 73-74.
[37] Neil Gaiman, 'Of Time, and Gully Foyle', in *The Stars My Destination*, pp. vii-x (p. ix).
[38] Wendell, p. 28.

Gully Foyle is my name
And Terra is my nation.
Deep space is my dwelling place
And death's my destination.

(Bester, *TSMD*, p. 16)

The jingle relates Foyle's position within the novel to contemporary concerns by focusing on concepts of nationality and the inevitable progression towards death, echoing fears of nuclear weapons. Each time Foyle awakes on the *Nomad*, he uses this jingle, line by line, to answer the questions:

"Who are you?"
[…]
"Where are you from?"
[…]
"Where are you now?"
[…]
"Where are you bound?"

(Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 17-18)

After *Vorga* rejects Foyle's plea for assistance and he is reborn, he asks himself these questions again. However, this time no answers are provided, echoing his newly reborn state and the need to rediscover himself in order to provide the responses. At the end of the novel, Foyle returns to the tool locker aboard the *Nomad* where he existed prior to his first awakening in order to await his final awakening.

This cyclical action parallels the return to the womb and series of rebirths throughout the novel. Foyle's descent into stasis at the end of the novel brings this awakening full circle, as Moira and Joseph, 'alongside the world […] prepared to await the awakening'(Bester, *TSMD*, p. 258). While this refers to Foyle and the end of his cycle of rebirth, it also implies a wider awakening of general society. Upon arriving in the locker, the jingle is repeated again. However, this time there are no questions, only answers. Foyle has thus been fully reconciled, from giving rote answers to rote questions (echoing social conformity), to having only questions

(needing his new identity to create individualistic responses), to having only answers (taking full control of his self and identity). The final iteration of the jingle also changes 'death's my destination' to 'The stars my destination' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 257. Author's emphasis removed). The Christ imagery implied at the end of the novel, with Foyle as potential saviour, reflects his progression towards enlightenment and furthers indications of death and rebirth.

The symbolic imagery of lambs as meek creatures echoes the social consideration of individuals as members of a mass herd, which Foyle aims to turn into tigers by encouraging them to think for themselves. However, this process ensures that any 'awakening' is externally induced, thus removing any individual approach to the change. By attempting to encourage this change in others, Foyle is imposing his own sense of individualism, thereby making the arrival to individuality not necessarily of the individual's own choosing. Foyle comments that 'They can all turn uncommon if they're kicked awake like I was' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 255). However, this statement raises questions of whether a universal break from conformity into individuality is not just another form of conformity.

If everyone becomes 'uncommon', the definition of what it means to be 'common' would shift. 'Uncommon' would become the average and individuality would no longer be a state of individualism but a new state of sameness. The issue with encouraging understanding of conformity is that, even with that understanding, individuals may wish to maintain their current social outlook. If individuals do not wish to be separate from mass society, it becomes a question of whether they have been brainwashed into thinking that, therefore requiring an 'awakening', or whether they want that conformed state, and, by wanting it, are actually asserting their individuality. Thomas S. Szasz considers individuals to knowingly waver between a desire for individualism and a desire for conformity.[39] Conformity, in this case, is not inherently bad; it is only considered so by those who forego it. The subjective nature of one's position within society makes it difficult to understand, or even know, the purposes and intents of those perceived to be in a conformed state.

What *The Stars My Destination* ultimately questions is not whether conformity is inherently a positive or a negative (though Bester's works certainly seem to argue the latter) but whether conformity should be a matter of choice. As

[39] Thomas S. Szasz, *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 28.

Randall Bennett Woods writes, 'if one conformed, he or she should be fully aware of the consequences.'[40] Thus, it becomes a matter of individual desire, rather than inescapable social pressures. During the Cold War, conformity was often preferred due to the nature of the war and the desire to exclude subversives. As such, it would appear that it was willingly chosen, but the external threat of blacklisting, prison, and Senate committees questions whether it was wholly voluntary. Darko Suvin considers each individual to require, to some degree, 'exterior validation' and that collectivism has become unavoidable as a result of this desire for the external to gratify the internal.[41] Therefore, individuals who are happy to conform should be so because they have considered their options, not because society tells them there is no other choice. It is this knowledge that Foyle wishes upon individuals. Thus, it is not conformity itself that is protested against but rather the lack of choice and unacceptance of the 'other'; conformity is merely the by-product.

Foyle's change from 'common' to 'uncommon' reflects this move from conformed to 'other'. It is only when Foyle sheds his everyman quality that he arrives at his own 'self' and becomes an individual.

> [H]e was born, he lived, and he died. After thirty years of existence and six months of torture, Gully Foyle, the stereotype Common Man, was no more. The key turned in the lock of his soul and the door was opened. What emerged expunged the Common Man forever.
>
> (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 22)

The key mentioned here echoes the key mentioned in Foyle's Merchant Marine record and demonstrates the dynamic nature of change indicated by Kelleghan. Foyle's description as having 'existed', with 'lived' being buffered on either side by 'born' and 'died', reflects life as a constant struggle between life and death. The difference in connotation indicates a perceived difference in quality of life between conformity and individualism, with Foyle pre- and post-awakening representing the two halves of this dichotomy.

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[40] Woods, p. 132.
[41] Darko Suvin, *Defined by a Hollow: Essays on Utopia, Science Fiction and Political Epistemology* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 330, 341.

This awakening is not just a release from conformity but a mental awakening of the individual nature of the internal. The importance of personal thought is found through various devices within the novel, such as jaunting and PyrE. Jaunting is the ability to instantly transport the self from one location to another through the power of thought. The mental visualisation of where they wish to be followed by the will to be there enables individuals to travel up to 1,000 miles. Individual ability limits each person's jaunting distance with outer space being the only distance which has never been crossed. Foyle surpasses the 1,000 mile limit while simultaneously jaunting through space, indicating that his awakened self is capable of breaking social barriers structured around individual thought. The accidental discovery of the ability mirrors social potential with Foyle's individual potential, as something obtainable but not yet unlocked. However, the transformative power of jaunting radically alters society in a similar manner to nuclear weapons.

When jaunting becomes prevalent, it develops a new class structure. It is explained that it became commonplace for employment applications to request one's jaunte class, indicating that employment was dependent on jaunting skill. As Bester writes, 'The limitations with which every man is born necessarily limited the ability to jaunte' (*TSMD*, p. 11). Once perceived limitations were reached, people were automatically classified and given a social position equal to their jaunting ability. The emphasis on individual mentality prescribing social situations indicates the connection between conformity and groupthink and the need for original thought in determining individualism.

Thinking is also how PyrE is ignited. PyrE is a substance in the novel that can be inferred to represent a futuristic advancement of nuclear weapons based on its nature as a thermonuclear explosive. Discussions regarding its militaristic importance and similarities to mutually assured destruction engages with analogous concerns surrounding nuclear weapons. While the focus on thinking may indicate a desire for the everyman to embrace their own mentality (making PyrE a symbol for individual liberation similar to jaunting), it also shows the responsibility that comes with individualism. Adam Roberts remarks that *The Stars My Destination* is essentially a book about 'will', with jaunting being the externalisation of the will to travel and PyrE as the 'concreate externalisation of mankind's will to destruction, the

symbol that links "wish" to "destruction"'.[42] As such, these two forms of externalised thought couple technological advancement with destruction and link to themes of rebirth and the Freudian death drive. Impulses behind the Freudian death drive make PyrE psychologically dangerous as the material could quickly satisfy these impulses, making the user require a strong will to forego these compulsions. The connection between 'will' and compulsive drives indicates a conflict between conscious desire and unconscious impulse, representing the dynamic between (chosen) individualism and (forced) conformity.

Responsibility towards society could lead to conformity due to a sense of duty and was profound in post-war America, helping fashion the attitudes and perceptions of the Cold War state. The lingering guilt from World War II and the sense of inevitability surrounding the Cold War made this responsibility particularly patriotic. Walter Shear claims that post-war America suffered from a general 'survivor's guilt', which pushed propaganda in the 1950s to urge people to be constantly aware of their need to contribute to the war effort. Shear further explains how 'contemporary society [had] made responsibility a one way street, a means of forcing individual behaviors into the particular paths it approves', which complements Alan Nadel's idea of personal narratives needing to match those approved by society.[43] A responsibility to society overrode responsibility to the self, as conforming became more important than individualism. With conformity comes the implication of a loss of individual thought, thus emphasising the importance placed on thinking within *The Stars My Destination*, where it is presented as a way for individuals to gain control of themselves and their surroundings. By having Foyle give PyrE to the public, Bester attempts to subvert the association between conformity and social responsibility by demonstrating Foyle's ability to assert his individuality while still undertaking this responsibility.

Foyle questions whether he should teach society how to 'space-jaunte' or give it control over PyrE, as he wonders whether a society concerned with social responsibility would understand the personal responsibility associated with their usage. Dual feelings regarding the atomic future reflect this wavering between the

[42] Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 207.
[43] Shear, pp. 10, 90, 98.

risks and the benefits of PyrE, which is mirrored in contemporary considerations.[44] Foyle questions this when confronted by Presteign who wants his property, PyrE, returned to him. In thinking aloud, however, he is answered by a robot. Foyle compares himself to the robot, complaining that humans are akin to robots as they claim to have free will but are actually only mechanised responses (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 247).

Foyle's response coming from a robot brings into question whether the answer he receives is genuine or a veiled response from society as a whole, as the robot as automaton appears to represent. However, the robot's break from its coded responses in order to converse with Foyle indicates a hope for mankind's ability to break from conformity (its coded response) and awaken from 'common' to 'uncommon'. The robot is said to be damaged by radiation making its response emphasise its position as 'other', as it is operating outside its programming. The robot tells Foyle that he should society PyrE and space-jaunting as 'A man is a member of society first, and an individual second'. Foyle counters by saying that 'society can be so stupid. So confused', to which he is told it is better to 'teach, not dictate' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 250, 251). The robot's response furthers the idea of social responsibility and answers earlier debates within the novel as to whether conformity should be thoroughly overturned or whether it is the knowledge regarding conformity which society needs. By teaching, not dictating, Foyle is not imposing individuality but rather allowing society the option. Foyle decides that he has no right to make decisions for the world and so offers society space-jaunting and PyrE for, even though dangerous, the world has the right to 'choose[] destruction'. The robot's assertion that 'Some must lead, and hope that the rest will follow' indicates that society should follow the example of being their own 'self', as following a specific individual would simply create more conformity (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 250, 251).

When asked what he wants in return for this information, Foyle replies that he wishes to be punished and purged. Believing it is what he deserves, he offers to return to Gouffre Martel or to be lobotomised (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 249). This desire for release from his 'sins' makes confinement desirable as these forms of escape

[44] For example, see Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'Atoms for Peace' (Papers as President, Speech Series, Box 5, United Nations Speech, 12 August 1953) <http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/atoms_for_peace/Binder13.pdf > [accessed 21 December 2015].

create the mechanised individual he believes everyone to be, indicating that Foyle considers this conformed state to be the worst punishment imaginable. While the robot epitomises the concept of an entity 'programmed' by society, it is worth recalling Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* (1921) in this instance.[45] Though the robot as automaton is fitting in Bester's discussion of conformity, the original usage of the term, indicating a biological organism that could be mistaken for human but is not, is just as useful. In this case, it recalls Bester's description of Foyle as 'existing' rather than 'living', aligning social programming with the idea of appearing human while actually submitting to externally prescribed thoughts and actions.

By allowing society the opportunity to make its own mistakes, Foyle is disapproving of its conformity but not condemning it without offering options. Foyle having control of something which technically belongs to everyone allows him to balk against a main feeling of the era, which Shear claims is the 'sense of being an inexorable part of a larger, inevitable scheme that may well be […] working to maim or destroy the individual self'.[46] Moral questions of annihilation queries whether PyrE is a solution and reflects arguments around nuclear weapons. Destruction as inevitable implies a failure to reconcile self and society. This inevitably can be avoided, the novel implies, by giving people the ability to think for themselves. Though subjective, Bester's approach to individualism is carefully tempered by teaching, not dictating, in that options are made available but are not forcibly imposed. This approach can be seen in Bester's decisions to leave many of his stories fairly open-ended as not being aware of the characters' choices means that the problem is presented but no singular solution is presumed.

Foyle's embodiment of his public and private selves is coupled with the dual selves he maintains internally. Even after he 'awakens' aboard the *Nomad*, rather than fully committing to his new self, he utilises the layers of his identity to insert himself into sectors of society to which he would normally not belong. However, as with his awakening, this utilisation is also prompted by an external force; the tattooing received from the Scientific People. Though isolated from wider society, The Scientific People operate in a similar manner. Their tattooing of Foyle assumes his acceptance of their community while the tattoo makes him physically similar to

[45] Karel Čapek, *Rossum's Universal Robots (R.U.R.): a collective drama in three acts with a comedy prelude*, trans. by David Short (London: Hesperus, 2011).
[46] Shear, p. 78.

the other members, thereby removing him as ‘other’. Each individual having a tattoo of their name further stresses the personal and social interplay of identity by exposing one’s identity and making them unable to employ a mask. However, Foyle’s tattooed mask (NOMAD) does not actually match his identity (Gulliver Foyle) and so he is accidentally given an external identity crisis in the form of others’ misrecognition of him.

By assuming Foyle wants to be part of their community, The Scientific People betray their belief that outsiders must be indoctrinated and, in fact, want to be so. If Foyle had remained with The Scientific People, he would have been readily accepted and his external identity would have been harmonious with the other members. However, by leaving this microcosm, he has entered a society wherein tattooing is not accepted and is thus immediately rendered as ‘other’. As such, depending on the company he keeps, Foyle is both insider and outsider. Foyle’s identity crisis is thus based on more than his need to realise his true self. Reconciliation also relies on realising his self’s place in society and maintaining that self despite social pressures. After Baker removes Foyle’s tattoo, the remaining scars force Foyle to gain self-control as his emotions cause the scars to appear when there is a rush of blood to his face (Bester, *TSMD,* p. 111). Therefore, Foyle’s tattoo acts as mediator between the physical and the mental. Though Foyle has always wanted such control over himself, this is achieved through external factors rather than his internal self. However, this external change has forced an internal change and, as such, a change has still occurred. Foyle’s internal control enables him to embrace his mental self by affording him an understanding of his own mind. In this case, society has helped Foyle discover his true self rather than hindering it, implying that the self needs society and vice versa but the relationship should not disallow individual control.

Connections between the tattoo and Foyle’s self-identity exemplifies the relation between the internal and external self and represents a diminishing reliance on external factors the more one gains control over their internal self. Neil Gaiman writes that Foyle’s tattoo, once outwardly removed, forces ‘him to learn control. His emotional state is no longer written in his face – it forces him to move beyond

predation, beyond rage, back to the womb'.[47] Returning to the womb indicates another rebirth of Foyle's self; not only mentally, but physically.

The externalisation of his emotions means Foyle's control over his tattoo forces an internalisation of the self by suppressing these emotions, which returns to questions of confinement within one's own body with the mind as prison.[48] While in the pitch black of Gouffre Martel, Foyle has no need to maintain control over his face as the tattoos cannot be seen. In return for this emotional freedom, however, is physical confinement. One aspect of Foyle's identity is thus suppressed in order for another to be experienced. The mirroring of wider social considerations of imprisonment underscores the confining nature of conformity and the self as only allowed freedom while in the privacy of one's own space. However, the association of this privacy with prison implies privacy to be subversive. Put forth by William H. Whyte, Jr. is the assumption by general society that the desire for privacy is 'an indication of some inner neurosis'.[49] This reflection on mental status returns to the association of prison with hospitals, furthering the connections between privacy and sickness.

Foyle initially finds it difficult to hide the tattoo's scars. Instead of affecting his identity, however, it alters his presentation of it to society. The ease with which Foyle maintains his masks and his multiple identities (e.g. Geoffrey Fourmyle) implies comfort in having these multiple selves, which contrasts the struggle endured by Bester's other characters. However, Bester shows that readily accepting these multiple identities can lead to an inability to maintain the self within each identity. When Baker removes the tattoos, it prompts Foyle's pursuers to realize that '"We've never seen his face . . . only the mask"'. While the literal is true, the figurative is as well. Tattoo or not, Foyle's pursuers have only seen one facet of his identity; the rest 'masked' by both his lack of, and eventual, control over himself. However, even Foyle fails to recognise himself without the 'mask' of tattoos and wonders whether Baker did any additional surgery. Jisbella tells him that '"What's inside you changed it. That's the ghoul you're seeing, along with the liar and the cheat"' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 104, 107). Living with the mask of the tattoo for so long has caused Foyle to forgot his true self, indicating that, while his use of multiple identities is voluntary,

[47] Gaiman, p. x.
[48] Kelleghan, p. 352.
[49] William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 352.

their insidious effect is still felt. As such, Foyle's identity crisis advances to nearly beyond repair before Foyle is even aware it is an issue.

In addition, the novel aims to examines the use of psychological techniques revolving around identity and confusion over authenticity. When Saul Dagenham attempts to extract *Nomad*'s location from Foyle in order to recover the PyrE, he uses a method of therapy in which the patient is told their sense of self is a delusion and they are actually someone else. This therapy foreshadows Foyle's transformation into Geoffrey Fourmyle (the name being suggested to him during the therapy). Foyle's ability to avoid Dagenham's scheme rests not on his internal strength but on his external appearance. Foyle resists admitting he lacks his own identity only upon seeing his reflection and the tattoo across his face. His external appearance, in essence, saves his internal identity, demonstrating the intertwined nature of these two aspects.

Written in 1951, J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* examines similar concerns and demonstrates the general literary conversation of which both novels are a part.[50] Foyle's use of the word 'phony' to describe Dagenham's therapy echoes Holden Caulfield's application of the word. Paralleling concerns of authenticity, 'phony' becomes a contrast to moments of self-understanding or self-recognition. Though Foyle is not his fully awakened self, he is awake enough to recognise the tattoo, which marks him as 'other'. It also marks him as himself, making his identity as 'other' his true identity, and helping cement his place in society. Foyle's recognition of himself prompts him to exclaim, '"It's real, me. This here is phony. What happened to me is real. I'm real, me"' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 65). The repetition of 'me' is indicative of Foyle's gutter speak, but also emphasises the phrase 'I'm real'. As such, Foyle's 'I' does have a 'me', thus implying R.D. Laing's consideration of the private self and the social self.[51] Foyle's identity crisis therefore arises from his misconception that he knows himself. This beliefs is shown to be erroneous and Foyle's identity crisis is revealed not as a split self, but as a self that inaccurately believes itself to be something which it is not.

Though presented as, and believed by Foyle to be, voluntary, his multiple identities are anything but, as his belief is predicated on a misconception of the

[50] J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (London: Penguin Books, 2010).
[51] See chapter 1 for this discussion. R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), p. 172.

impact society has exerted over Foyle's identity. The tattoo as an identifier exemplifies this concept as it is an external factor, given to him against his will, which helps him identify himself, thus irrevocably intertwining his sense of self with the perceptions and desires of an external public. Foyle's acquisition of the Geoffrey Fourmyle identity gives him the freedom to move in a society that would otherwise restrict him, indicating the importance of perceived identity over actual identity. Foyle's performance as Fourmyle, designed to be as uncharacteristic of Gulliver Foyle as possible, is so ostentatious it prompts one spectator to claim, '"It can't be human."' When affecting a different aspect of this false personality (the spontaneity of Fourmyle's actions being part of his identity), another man asks, '"Is that the same one?"', to which someone responds, '"Couldn't be. He looks human"' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 126, 140). This exchange reflects how Foyle's authentic self is both 'other' and not, recognising the split between the Foyle with a tattoo and the Foyle without, as well as the Foyle prior to his awakening and the Foyle in stasis.

The spectators' comments indicate a desire to label Foyle as either human or 'other' while simultaneously reinforcing their own identity as human by comparing Foyle to their expectations of what being human means. Though the physical person in front of the spectators is the same man, their reaction to his personality changes reflects the difference between bodily identity and psychological identity. Psychological characteristics are shown to indicate a person is their 'self' despite any bodily differences, which accentuates Foyle's identity crisis.[52] Each time his psychological self changes, his physical self does as well. When he returns to his original physical self (after the removal of the tattoo), his inability to recognise his internal self demonstrates that though Foyle has returned to his physical origins, he has not done so mentally. As a result, he suffers a disconnect between his physical and mental selves which contributes to his overall crisis.

Foyle's identity has become predicated on the use of false selves. With the underlying identity crisis now an intrinsic part of his self, it has become difficult to identify as an unwanted or abnormal aspect. Foyle's knowledge of his own duality likely originated with his tattoos. His outward appearance prior to their removal and the scars' ability to show his internal self after their removal means Foyle is acutely aware of how he sees himself and how society experiences him. When tattooed,

[52] This difference between psychological and bodily identity was previously discussed in regards to John Perry in chapter 1.

Foyle would avert his face in public out of fear of being considered a freak. However, with the tattoos gone, the scars which remain cause him to be struck with the same anxiety. Jisbella explains that the markings will only show when he is caught in a fit of strong emotion, to which he responds, '"I can't walk around afraid to feel anything because it'll turn me into a freak!"' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 113). More generally, this can be seen as a desire not to feel things incongruous with society for fear of becoming an outcast.

The external representation of internal thoughts and feelings reflects the dual nature of conformity as external actions may not truly represent an individual's self. Allen Ginsberg refers to this dichotomy as a retreat into the internal self which substitutes for communication with the external. The consciousness is pushed into the self and thinks mainly of 'how it will hold its face and eyes and hands in order to make a mask'.[53] The conscious effort to produce an external self means it is internally created but it being done to present a particular self to the public creates a disconnect between this external presentation and the internal self which created it. However, Foyle is essentially unable to conform as he would be unable to claim one stance while privately thinking another as a strong emotional reaction would betray him. Attempting to conform would thus reveal Foyle as 'other', making Foyle's dual self a social identity crisis as well as a private one.

External pressure to present oneself a particular way is not specific to this novel and represents a wider concern of 1950s' Cold War society. Philip K. Dick's *Mary and the Giant* (1987 [1953-55]), for example, also demonstrates the social pressure an individual can experience in attempting to feel comfortable in society.[54] The novel gives an overarching view of tension and fear in 1950s' small-town America. Mary Anne Reynolds, the protagonist, is often referred to as anxious or tense and having repressed fear overlaid with a layer of complacency so as to appear 'normal'. Though presented in the form of sexual uncertainty or fears of abuse, the discussion regarding these underlying emotions can be applied to the contemporary Cold War atmosphere and the perceived conformity of suburbia. 'She had been trained to be afraid; she had not invented her fear by herself, had not generated it or encouraged it or asked it to grow.' The novel recognises that this fear should not

[53] Thomas Clark, 'Allen Ginsberg', in *Writers at Work: The 'Paris Review' Interviews*, ed. by George Plimpton, intro. by Alfred Kazin, III (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), pp. 279-320 (p. 310).
[54] Philip K. Dick, *Mary and the Giant* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1988).

make someone 'other' since it is induced by external forces over which one has no control: 'Nobody had made Mary Anne go wrong, because she had not gone wrong; she was as right as anybody else and far more right than some.'[55] Though this fear and tension is perceived as an appropriate response to 1950s' society, it is not accepted as it raises suspicions of subversive elements. The tension and repetition of ideas about pressure throughout the novel echo ideas throughout Bester's work regarding the internal self and pressures to maintain an acceptable outward appearance.

When Foyle meets Olivia Presteign, he realises he is not the only one to suffer anxiety over external perceptions of his self. Olivia is albino and as a result of her condition is described as 'a Snow Maiden, an Ice Princess with coral eyes and coral lips, impervious, mysterious, unattainable'. Olivia's personality is perceived to be written on her face, as an external representation of her internal self. Olivia tells Foyle that she resents her 'princess' status and is indignant at the treatment she receives from men based on her looks. '"But I'm not like that . . . inside. I'm not. I'm not. Never"' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 166, 176). This repetition echoes Foyle's repetition of 'I'm real, me', which Fiona Kelleghan considers to 'emphasize the theme of imprisonment […]. Characters who repeat themselves are either in prison or mad, or both'.[56] Just as Foyle and his tattoo signify the physical body as emotional prison, Olivia is mentally imprisoned within her body as a result of her physical appearance. It is revealed that the order to ignore Foyle's request for rescue from the *Nomad* was given by Olivia out of hatred for being forced to live blind and thus, essentially forced to live as 'other'. The explanation of herself and Foyle as monsters due to their unerring desire for revenge prompts a negative reaction from Foyle, underscoring his continued misunderstanding of his current identity (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 210-211).

Foyle does, however, recognise Olivia's anger at being confined by social perceptions, as he too is aware that loss of freedom is more devastating than 'the prospect of [] butchery' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 66). This sentiment echoes an assertion of Kierkegaard's:

[55] Dick, *Mary and the Giant*, pp. 219-20, 220.
[56] Kelleghan, p. 360.

> [A] self is the thing the world is least apt to inquire about, and the thing of all people the most dangerous for a man to let people notice that he has it. The greatest danger, that of losing one's own self, may pass off as quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, that of an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc., is sure to be noticed.[57]

The self is constantly being influenced and thus could be considered to always be changing. As a result, changes may be gradual and innocuous, hence how quietly the self may pass without notice. Foyle's inability to recognise himself after his tattoo is removed demonstrates Kierkegaard's statement as Foyle's identity has changed without him realising. The mutability of the self questions whether the self exists in the static sense, as a base concept underlying these changes. Daniel Dennett determines the self to be invisible to introspection, which bolsters ideas of the self as more readily understood by external observers. The self can thus be anything from a 'ghost in the machine', reminiscent of Arthur Koestler, to an abstraction.[58] However, Dennett does mention that the self's invisibility has suggested to some that 'the self was nothing at all, a figment of metaphysically fevered imaginations'.[59] Therefore, one's sense of self relies on one's conclusions of what the self is. The effect of thought on presentations of the self follows considerations of thought within the novel overall and demonstrates the fragility of the self.

A desire to lose the self causes Lindsey Joyce, captain of the *Vorga*, to become a member of the Skoptsy sect after scuttling 600 refugees and disregarding Foyle's signal for help.[60] The Skoptsy sect operates on the anxiety of the 'other' by exploring fears about the loss of self, especially as voluntarily forfeited. Members of the Skoptsy sect are 'Without senses, without pleasure, without pain' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 194). This can be seen as an extreme version of the control Foyle must exert over his own emotions. However, those in the sect have their sensory nervous systems

[57] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. and intro. by Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 49.
[58] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967).
[59] Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 412-13.
[60] Carolyn Wendell notes that the *Vorga*'s jettisoning of refugees can be likened to the number of deaths in concentration camps during World War II, thus furthering ideas of guilt in postwar America. Wendell, p. 12.

voluntarily severed, meaning they do not need to consciously control themselves.[61] Reminiscent of Reich's demolition, the surgery undergone by the sect alludes to the Russian sect of the same name which practiced self-castration, giving a real-world analogy which associates this voluntary conformed state with the Soviet Union.[62] As Foyle describes Joyce, it is 'as though he's dead. He *is* dead' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 194. Author's own emphasis). Though they live, they experience nothing, which recalls Bester's description of Foyle as 'existing' rather than 'living'. Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou consider the level of social anxiety in the 1950s to be 'a kind of death in life which people live in suspended animation'.[63] The deadened senses and lack of emotion evokes the implications of conformity seen in contemporary novels such as *The Puppet Masters* (1951) and *The Body Snatchers* (1954).[64] Fear of losing self-control is examined in these works and, though they reflect contemporary fears of foreign invasion, they also demonstrate concerns of losing personal identity.

The Mr. Prestos who work for Presteign are another example of this voluntary self-change, though the Mr. Prestos strive towards social integration rather than away from it. Thus, their voluntary conformity takes place in society where it is accepted, differing from the Skoptsy sect, in which the organisation and its members are removed from society. That both the sect and The Scientific People are enclaves isolated from mass society may explain their 'otherness' despite their conformed initiations (i.e. tattooing and surgery) as their 'conformity' does not match nor achieve the same ends as mass conformity. Thus, conformity can be either voluntary or involuntary and grant either acceptance or suspicion.

Becoming a Mr. Presto involves the loss of 'a face and body of his own'. A new Mr. Presto soon becomes, through 'surgery and psycho-conditioning', 'identical with the other 496 Mr Prestos' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 47).[65] While both procedures involve a loss of freedom, becoming a member of the Skoptsy sect allows the possibility of retaining the internal self. The 'psycho-conditioning' involved with

[61] For a different approach to this theme, see Bernard Wolfe's *Limbo* (New York, NY: Random House, 1952) which discusses physical amputation as a method of self-control. The modification of the self will be discussed further in the proceeding chapter.
[62] Alfred Bester, 'My Affair with Science Fiction', in *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 443-76 (p. 470).
[63] Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou, *America since 1945: The American Moment* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), p. 77.
[64] Robert Heinlein, *The Puppet Masters* (London: Pan Books, 1969); Jack Finney, *The Body Snatchers*, intro. by Graham Sleight (London: Gollancz, 2010).
[65] Similar practices can be found in advertising; an obvious example being Ronald McDonald.

becoming a Mr. Presto, however, implies a loss of even that. Akin to brainwashing, this practice demonstrates how mentality can be externally shaped.

Having living brand symbols or representational logos of a company is not particular to Presteign stores, as other clans are said to perform similar procedures on their employees. The desire to ensure that purchasers around the world can enter any store and be greeted with a familiar face places a certain amount of pride and status on the transformation. The purpose is thus not uniformed conformity but conformity to an ideal. Irving Howe considers American society to conform most strongly to the 'vast insidious sum of pressures and fashions'.[66] This trend among clans and their stores is essentially a business fashion which the public expects these stores to uphold, making the conformity of their employees a pandering to the customers more than a desire of the store itself. The feedback between need for conformity and the act of conforming emphasises not only both internal and external pressures but elucidates the concept that conformity is expected and needed.

This transformation of the self reflects Foyle's transformations between himself and Geoffrey Fourmyle. With the Fourmyle aspect created specifically as a public spectacle, Foyle is careful about what he shows the public and what he reserves for himself. When recognised in a store, he immediately switches to his public persona, leaving his personal self private. Foyle explains his public/private split by saying, '"All this Four Mile Circus is camouflage. Nobody ever suspects a clown"' (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 138). Indicating Foyle's recognition of the usefulness of masks, this explains his repeated utilisation of his various personas. When he employs Robin as his 'social secretary', Foyle's public self becomes an aspect not only of his private self, but of Robin's private self as well, as it is her thoughts that Foyle takes in privately and utilises publicly. However, this means Robin's internal self is no longer private as she must share it with Foyle, linking her private self with his public self and merging their three selves together.

Foyle's self becomes externalised through the Burning Man, which is a version of himself originating from the St. Patrick's Cathedral fire. Foyle's existence within the fire is portrayed through a typographical representation of synaesthesia, which Leslie Flood considered 'magnificently done'.[67] Using time-jaunting, the

[66] Irving Howe, 'This Age of Conformity', in *The Partisan Review Anthology*, ed. by William Philips and Philip Rahv (New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1962), pp. 145-64 (pp. 154-55).
[67] Flood, 'Review: *Tiger! Tiger!*', p. 127.

Burning Man revisits Foyle at key points throughout Foyle's progression of self as an external manifestation of Foyle's superego. The conversation with the robot and the decision to release PyrE to society occur after the scene in the cathedral, making the Burning Man the transition point between Foyle as brute and Foyle as individual. Similar to The Man with No Face who haunted Reich, the purpose of this external self is to aid the protagonist towards self-realisation and contrition. The Burning Man mainly appears at times when Foyle appears to be reverting to his brute self, such as nearly torturing Sigurd and Lindsey Joyce in order to learn why the *Vorga* had refused his request for rescue (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 203).

The Burning Man as Foyle's superego means Foyle's ignorance of the Burning Man is an ignorance of his own conscience, hence Foyle's moments of moral corruptness. By appearing to Foyle at moments of crisis, the Burning Man is shown to know more about Foyle's self than does Foyle, making the Burning Man his external observer and thus serving as psychoanalyst. Due to the Burning Man and Foyle being the same individual, this implies Foyle is his own external observer. However, Foyle's ignorance of his self demonstrates the inability to truly know the self without external aid (e.g. psychotherapy), indicating the trouble with self-analysis, hence contemporary difficulty in understanding one's own mind.

Foyle's disregard for his own situation mirrors the examination of wartime complacency throughout the novel, seen through references to contemporary politics, images of the Cold War, and the dangers of nuclear weapons. The fission bomb is mentioned multiple times, though the prevalence of war causes Bester to only casually mention the bomb in a long list of reasons for the destruction of the Spanish Stairs in Rome. War is, again, taken for granted and the causal explanation for the Spanish Stairs is reminiscent of the casual mention of the destruction of the Bastion West Side in *The Demolished Man*. In discussing failed jaunte attempts soon after its discovery, Bester refers to the greater 'monstrosity of the times' but does not go into greater detail (*TSMD*, p. 9). C. Wright Mills considers 'mass indifference' the true reason for the political and psychological push towards war, rather than an actual desire for it.[68]

Indifference is therefore responsible not only for the war itself but the lack of interest in its consequences. Presented as background information, the war is

[68] Smetak, p. 21. Smetak is quoting C. Wright Mills, *The Causes of World War III* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1958), p. 86.

ubiquitous and yet too remote to have any impact on the everyday dealings of the protagonist. The atomic attack on New York is an instance in which the war and the characters collide but the scene does more to cement the relationship between Foyle and Olivia than it does to further discussions of the war. Foyle's dazed state after the attack is attributed to his conversation with Olivia, making him 'scarcely aware of the confusion and disaster around him', which is a fairly apt description of the psychic numbing prevalent in Bester's work (Bester, *TSMD*, p. 176).

As the bombing of New York attests, mutually assured destruction was not a guaranteed defence measure. Bester makes a point, however, of utilising this Cold War political theory throughout the novel in order to examine individual understanding of the concept. Foyle believes he can find *Vorga* without hindrance since he '"cover[s] every weak spot down the line. I got something on everybody who could stop me before I kill *Vorga*"'. Assuming that individuals involved with *Vorga* would not retaliate against Foyle because he possesses something which could destroy them echoes the implication that possessing a nuclear bomb would prevent an attack. Foyle's individual use of mutually assured destruction mirrors its political use by the state. When Presteign reveals the use of PyrE and its possession by the Inner Planets, Dagenham wonders if '"this will give the Outer Satellites pause"'. Parallels between the United States and the Soviet Union can be drawn and the significance of nuclear weapons in keeping the Cold War cold as they would supposedly be enough to prevent the instigation of a 'holocaust' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 41, 217, 123). Such language is reminiscent of World War II and the social guilt and responsibility discussed earlier.

Captain Peter Y'ang-Yeovil of Central Intelligence is questioned regarding PyrE's usefulness in determining a victory in the war. Pointing to the use of the fission bomb in 1945, he explains the difference possessing such a material could have, '"especially when there's a chance of the enemy getting it first"'. The rush to boast of a more advanced arsenal than the opposing side incites Foyle to exclaim, '"Millions for defense but not one cent for survival"' (Bester, *TSMD*, pp. 57, 253). By attempting to gain a military advantage, both sides seem to have ignored the potential consequences of nuclear war, as it no longer becomes a question of surviving nuclear weapons, but of surviving nuclear fallout.

Military spending during the Truman administration increased dramatically in order to ensure America maintained 'the largest nuclear arsenal in the world' and

the Marshall Plan encouraged increased military spending and economic growth across Europe to prevent the spread of Communism.[69] Foyle's statement reflects this increased spending as the focus on defensive strategies meant little to nothing was spent on what might happen if those defensive strategies failed. Expectations of American success created frustration when it was realised that outright victory was perhaps not possible in a war where 'Eishenhower's reliance on nuclear weapons forfeited America's capability to respond flexibly to low intensity conflicts and limited wars'.[70] This myopic approach to the Cold War indicates the obsession with nuclear weapons and the contemporary context in which literary works concerning nuclear war were written.

If a 'brute' such as Foyle can awaken into a moral conscience and social responsibility, while maintaining a self despite external pressures, Bester concludes that there is hope for the rest of society to achieve something similar. However, Leslie Flood considers the ending of the work, wherein Joseph and The Scientific People await Foyle's final awakening, to be an intrusion on the author's part and that Foyle's realisation of his self and moral conscience is 'out-of-character'.[71] Flood's review foreshadows Bester's interview with Charles Platt in 1970 wherein Bester begins to debate the realistic nature of this realisation, therefore creating a sense of ambiguity about the novel in regards to the 'moral of the story'. Bester confessed that his belief in the ending of the novel was perhaps not as plausible as he had originally imagined.

> I may have believed in it then. Now, I don't know. I have great faith in people on the one hand, but on the other hand I think there are an awful lot of idiots running around. […] I can't speak for the Continent, or England; they may be a hell of a lot more adult than we are in the States, where three-quarters of us are children, children with delusions.[72]

[69] Woods, pp. 71, 46-47; Levine and Papasotiriou, p. 52.
[70] M. L. Dockrill, *The Cold War: 1945-1963* (Basingstoke: Macmillian Education, 1988), p. 59; Richard H. Immerman, 'Foreign Relations in the 1950s', in *A Companion to American Foreign Relations*, ed. by Robert D. Schulzinger (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 292-308 (p. 297).
[71] Flood, 'Review: *Tiger! Tiger!*', p. 127.
[72] Charles Platt, 'Alfred Bester', in *Who Writes Science Fiction?* (Manchester: Savoy Books, 1980). pp. 108-18 (p. 116).

Bester was living in England at the time he wrote the novel and was perhaps removed enough from American society to have a level of optimism not shared by his contemporaries. Bester claimed that an advantage of being an American ex-patriot in England was the ability to 'write with the best qualities of both cultures', thus enabling him to examine the anxiety and tension of American culture without actually existing within it.[73]

Despite Bester's faltering belief in the message behind *The Stars My Destination*, the work reflects similar literary reactions of the time, such as Allen Ginsberg's 'America', published the same year as Bester's novel.[74] Ginsberg's poem espouses a similar sense of responsibility in post-war America, claiming that '[Time Magazine's] always telling me about responsibility'. Ginsberg goes on to state, 'It occurs to me I am America. / I am talking to myself again', which echoes Bester's use of the mirroring between social and individual and the conflation of the two which often occurs.[75] In addition, Ginsberg claims that 'America you don't really want to go to war', which could be an observation that war was not the desire of each individual involved as well as a recognition of the significance of stockpiling weapons without the intent of using them. Ginsberg goes on to say, 'America it's them bad Russians. / Them Russians them Russians and them Chinamen'.[76] The repetitious manner in which these Communists countries are mentioned recalls Kelleghan's examination of repetition's connection to prison. Associations of the Communist enemy with collectivism indicates a form of social prison which Bester parallels in his discussions of domestic conformity.

Ginsberg references that he used to be a Communist when he was a kid, likely referencing the House Un-American Activities Committee belief that current political affiliations did not necessarily erase past affiliations.[77] Political pressures therefore aim to shape the self into a socially acceptable individual. The impact on

[73] Alfred Bester, 'Books', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 5, November 1960, pp. 90-93 (p. 91).
[74] Allen Ginsberg, 'America', in *Howl and Other Poems,* ed. by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters, intro. by William Carlos Williams (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996), pp. 39-43.
[75] Ginsberg, p. 41, lines 55, 58-59.
[76] Ginsberg, p. 42, lines 95, 96-97.
[77] 'Past conduct may well relate to present fitness; past loyalty may have a reasonable relationship to present and future trust.' *Garner v. City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works*, 341 U.S. 720, 731 (1951).

the psyche is clear and Ginsberg echoes this in his references to psychoanalysts and psychology, reflecting contemporary interest in Freud.[78]

Bester's views on Cold War conformity and psychological impact are thus not singular but rather executed through a particular approach. The relation between Bester's work and those of his contemporaries demonstrates the reactions between authors and society and the literary atmosphere which Bester contributed to during the 1950s. Bester's focus on this atmosphere as a backdrop which is then overlaid with psychological implications creates a consideration of the split self and crises of identity which is particular to his writing.

The Stars My Destination demonstrates Bester's consideration that a restructuring of society, where individuals are allowed to be 'other', would erase conformity and allow freedom of self. It becomes clear throughout the novel that it is not Foyle's transition from 'common' to 'uncommon' which results in his split identity, but rather his inability to recognise the negative impact of his chosen identity. Foyle's readily accepts his brute self due to his desire for revenge, but it is not his best self and does not represent his awakened self. Foyle eventually comes to realise that the worst 'uncommon' aspects of himself have erased the best 'common' aspects, and that a complete rebirth can be just as destructive as it is informative. Thus, a rebirth should awaken the self, not rewrite it, as Foyle demonstrates that this would lead to a dual nature which blurs the lines between self, society, individualism, and conformity.

Foyle, Lindsey Joyce, and Olivia Presteign, and even Saul Dagenham to an extent, are aware of their 'otherness'. Therefore, they operate within the tension and anxiety Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk regard as necessary for collective survival in contrast to the numbing necessary for individual comfort.[79] Their awareness of their situation removes them from collective survival, however, as their status as 'other' places them outside society and so forced to survive on individual terms. Foyle's growing understanding of his position as 'other' and the impact of his recognition of social responsibility on his place in society mirrors Halsyon's growing recognition of his psychological unoriginality in '5,271,009', making Foyle's progression of selves akin to the process undergone through psychoanalysis.

[78] Ginsberg, p. 40, line 34.
[79] Robert Jay Lifton and Richard Falk, *Indefensible Weapons: The Political and Psychological Case Against Nuclearism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1982), p. 108.

Foyle's recognition of his crisis occurs nearly concurrently with his attempt to reconcile it. However, without his final awakening, it is difficult to guarantee whether his moral conscience, imposed on him by the Burning Man, has been integrated into his self. Though the crisis is continuous throughout, the reader and other characters are relatively aware of it while the protagonist is not. This is a reversal of Bester's other works in which nearly everyone is unaware of the crisis or key information regarding identity is withheld. As such, *The Stars My Destination* moves beyond not knowing the self to believing the self is known even when it is not. Bester demonstrates the destructive nature of both situations and Foyle can be seen to represent individuals who believe they are either comfortable in their conformity or consider themselves awakened but are actually only conforming on a different level. Foyle can thus be seen as Bester's perception of the average common man in 1950s' American society.

The mirroring between social and individual demonstrates an anxiety over the self and what personal identity actually means in a society that requires cooperation between it and the self. Labels reinforced by others (e.g. religion, politics, race) contribute to, and help form, this self but Bester's examination of the interplay between individual and social responsibility indicates a perception of the self which operates within these labels but simultaneously contributes one's own definition of self. As such, Kierkegaard's assertion of the fragility of the self becomes applicable only when this self-labelling becomes unable to assert itself. Explored within the novel through Bester's examination of Foyle's progression of selves, identity is indicated as capable of moulding these manifested proto-selves (such as Foyle's 'common man' self) into an awakened self through personal progression. Foyle's varying levels of conformity are helpful in examining stages of the self, as conformity proportionally decreases as self-awareness increases, demonstrated within the novel by Bester's mirroring of self-awakening with psychological and social awareness.

5. '[The] emotional vacuum': The mechanisation of humanity, 1957-1958

I.

When Bester returned to the United States in 1956 as a full-time writer for *Holiday*, his contributions to science fiction noticeably dropped.[1] Bester's science fiction was still being published in the form of a collection of earlier works (*Starburst* (1958)) and though he was producing fewer science fiction texts, they were not non-existent.[2] Richard Raucci writes that Bester 'couldn't keep his restless mind from using the same kinds of dazzling methods he put into his fiction into articles for *Holiday* magazine' and Bester's non-genre work continued to reflect sf tropes and themes.[3]

Originally given at the University of Chicago on February 22nd, 1957, 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' is a lecture turned essay.[4] Bester considers the thinking man for whom science fiction is intended to be a Renaissance Man, thereby indicating ideas of specialisation, which often leads to a lack of humanity. Bester refers to specialisation as 'grim' and instead champions versatility, which he considers sf to have ('Renaissance Man', pp. 409, 422). Arthur Koestler considers neurotics to be victims of specialisation, resulting in their 'compulsions, phobias, and elaborate defence-mechanisms'.[5] Discussions of specialisation and its relation with these disorders is seen in Bester's fiction regarding his treatment of elites, especially in 'Disappearing Act'.[6] An interest in all aspects of civilisation and human behaviour is championed in authors such as Theodore Sturgeon and Bester attributes his own understanding of such themes to be the reason for the success of *The Demolished Man* ('Renaissance Man', pp. 423, 424).[7]

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[1] Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), p. 11.
[2] Alfred Bester, *Starburst* (New York, NY: New American Library of World Literature, 1958).
[3] Richard Raucci, 'Introduction to the Articles', in *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000) ,p. 378; An example of this, 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space', will be discussed in the proceeding chapter. Alfred Bester, 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space', in *Redemolished*, pp. 379-89.
[4] Alfred Bester, 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man', in *Redemolished*, pp. 408-30 (p. 411). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[5] Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), p. 177.
[6] Alfred Bester, 'Disappearing Act', in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 3-21.
[7] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man*, intro. by Harry Harrison (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).

As with much of Bester's non-science fiction, the essay takes a personal approach to the subject. Thomas Hill Schaub writes that it was the 'typical direction of the fifties' for writers to move 'toward a first person voice vaguely disguising the private life of the author'.[8] Considering the nature of non-fiction work, Bester's presence in this essay is hardly vague but Bester's various utilisations of the 'I' in his non-fiction, non-sf, and sf reflects his exploration of identity by focusing on how the self is presented.

The authorial reflection of the 'I' is furthered in the essay when Bester writes that there exists a communication between literature and its readers. Influence between science fiction and its fans causes sf to reflect not only its authors and readers, but their relationship as well. As previously discussed in regards to Bester's guest editorial, 'What's the Difference?', this tripartite reflection of influence creates and encourages this communication between its contributing aspects.[9] However, Malcolm Cowley notes that authors often write with a double audience in mind: 'the broader public they would like to reach' and 'the critics they must be sure to please'. In addition, these writers were 'constantly handicapped by the emptiness of the characters and situations about which they have been obliged to write'.[10] This imposed duality thus influenced what Bester perceived to be the lack of inwardness of most hack writers and contributed to the need to conceal oneself while simultaneously revealing that same self through writing. However, a work has the potential to reveal things which the author may not want, or intend, to divulge.

Bester writes in 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' that 'no matter what any man does, he holds a mirror up to himself. He continually reveals himself, especially when he tries hardest to conceal himself' ('Renaissance Man', p. 412). Bester's focus on psychology and the Cold War thus reflects Bester's own thoughts and opinions on contemporary society. However, Bester's biographical note in *Fantastic* (1953) indicates that he is not always prone to being straight-forward about himself, demonstrating the potential disconnect between his own 'I' and 'me' and reflecting the identity crises found within his works as his own self-mirror.[11]

[8] Thomas Hill Schaub, *American Fiction in the Cold War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 85.
[9] Alfred Bester, 'What's the Difference?', *Science Fantasy*, vol. 4, no. 12, February 1955, pp. 2-5.
[10] Malcolm Cowley, *The Literary Situation* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1961), pp. 62, 67.
[11] Alfred Bester, 'They Write…', *Fantastic*, vol. 2, no. 3, May-June 1953, p. 2.

This external revelation of the self through writing reflects Freudian psychoanalysis through the use of an external observer to help understand the unconscious. Colin Wilson furthers this by commenting that 'language is the natural medium for self-analysis', therefore furthering the connection between literature and self-revelation and indicating the usefulness of psychoanalysis as the 'talking cure'.[12] Exposing the self reveals internal hopes and fears considered to be universal, as Bester indicates in the prologue to *The Demolished Man*.[13] Jean-Paul Sartre contends that 'there is not a taste, a mannerism, or an human act which is not *revealing*'.[14] As such, literature cannot help but be a mirror of the author as the act of writing, regardless of topic, is considered a revealing act.

However, just as writing can reveal the self, it can also reveal the lack of a self. Bester considered the emptiness of the majority of contemporary science fiction to reflect the pulp fiction of the 1930s. In order to conform to what the public wanted, Bester comments that 'honest craftsmen' were often forced to 'hack' in order to satisfy the public. Bester considers this the starting point for the general decline of science fiction, stating that 'science fiction began to reflect the inwardness of the hack writer, and the essence of the hack writer is that he has no inwardness' ('Renaissance Man', pp. 415, 413). Lacking an inner self is often coupled with external conformity, thus mirroring the relationship between 'hack' writers and the public they are attempting to satisfy. John W. Aldridge claimed that post-World War II writers were attempting to represent a world empty of value and thus their writing reflected the 'emptiness of the characters and situations about which they have been obliged to write'.[15] Thus, writing is no longer a mirror of the author, but rather of the masses, therefore creating a form of cultural conformity reinforced by the writer/reader relationship. Bester attributes the perceived decline of science fiction to this conformity created through attempting to please the public. By reinforcing contemporary values, authors ignored their own values, leading to this lack of inwardness and demonstrating the dangers of social conformity.

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[12] Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1956), p. 147.
[13] Alfred Bester, '*The Demolished Man*: The Deleted Prologue', in *Redemolished*, pp. 529-41.
[14] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), p. 589. Author's own emphasis.
[15] Cowley, p. 67. Cowley is quoting John W. Aldridge, *After the Lost Generation: A Critical Study of the Writers of Two Wars* (London: Vision, 1959). Additional bibliographic information has been unable to be located.

The lack of inwardness which Bester attributes to hack writers is perpetuated by what he considers a lack of 'contact with reality'. Bester considers science fiction to begin to attempt realism at some point in the forties.[16] An absence of realism means a reversion to the pulp fiction he consistently derides (Bester, 'Renaissance Man', p. 413). Critics of the time similarly placed importance on realism, and public opinion invariably influenced this. Schaub writes that 'The novel's relationship to social history – to "reality" – was the central preoccupation of the critics who wrote about narrative fiction in the years after World War II'. Along with the start of the 1950s, these years created among critics and writers what Schaub refers to as the 'discourse between art as the medium of ahistorical universals and art as a commercial product designed for the masses'.[17] This discourse lends itself particularly well to Bester's own considerations between 'honest craftsmen' and the 'hack'. However, Irving Howe criticised novelists of the fifties by claiming 'they do not represent directly the postwar American experience'.[18] This critique of a lack of representation reflects the absence of contact with reality discussed by Bester and demonstrates why realism was perceived as still missing from fiction.

Bester's overall considerations regarding the representation of the self in art can be seen here, though he discusses it in rather broad terms. Bester concedes that this self-representation, however, is fairly reliant on public opinion.

> [T]he important ingredient in the artist is not talent, technique, genius, or luck – the important ingredient is himself. […] If what you are appeals to your public, you'll be successful. […] But, if your personality attracts no one, then despite all crafts and cleverness, you'll fail.
>
> (Bester, 'Renaissance Man', p. 412)

Based on this, those writers Bester considered to be hacking it at science fiction have failed themselves by altering their most 'important ingredient'. The continued success of the pulps, however, indicates that this lack of inwardness must have appealed to some portion of the population. Though, as Bester points out, fans did

[16] Bester, 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space', p. 379.
[17] Schaub, pp. 25, 28.
[18] Irving Howe, *A World More Attractive: A View of Modern Literature and Politics* (New York, NY: Horizon, 1963), pp. 92-93.

revolt against this decline in quality. By requesting better quality work from authors and editors, a part of society reflected those characters within Bester's works who are separate from conformed society. The split self of the authors is therefore replicated in the differing opinions of the fans. As such, the communication feedback between authors and readers demonstrates the replication of not only tastes but of this split in society.

The progression of sf from the 1930s to the 1950s is described by Bester as moving away from this lack of inwardness towards an understanding of human behaviour; a move which Bester attributes to John W. Campbell, Jr.. Reaffirming Bester's considerations of Campbell's influence, Adam Roberts writes that the Golden Age often reflected Campbell's tastes, 'who played a larger role than anyone else in disseminating prescriptive ideas of what SF ought to be'.[19] Genuine descriptions of the self and the injection of human emotion into the genre enabled authors to shed their 'hack' persona and allow their own selves to influence their writing. The need for 'unique individuals' with unique stories supposedly helped strengthen science fiction as a whole and Bester considers the most successful magazines to be so because they were run by men like Campbell, who gave the field 'character', while Herbert Gold and Anthony Boucher helped broaden the genre's horizons. As a result, their collective 'forceful inwardness' contrasted them with the perceived lack of inwardness of 'hack' writers ('Renaissance Man', p. 415).

In addition to this focus on the human, Bester considers science fiction to be concerned with far-reaching implications rather than the day-to-day. Instead of acting as escape fiction from tense reality, Bester believes science fiction is there to excite a calm reality. Referring to science fiction's ability to strike attention, Bester instead considers sf to be 'arrest fiction'. Therefore, instead of dealing with mundane pressures, Bester asserts that sf focuses on the 'big decisions' ('Renaissance Man', pp. 418, 420). However, Bester claims that women 'find perpetual pleasure in the day-to-day details of living', thereby contrasting women with the 'big decisions'. Indicating that women would thus not be fond of a genre based on these decisions, Bester believes that 'women, as a rule, are not fond of science fiction' ('Renaissance Man', pp. 421, 418). By considering women to be invested in everyday living,

[19] Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 195. See chapter 3, section 1 for a previous discussion on Rob Latham's assertions regarding Campbell. Rob Latham, 'Fiction, 1950-1963', in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Mark Bould and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 80-89 (p. 83).

Bester reiterates his comments regarding sf as 'arrest fiction', since women finding stimulation in the everyday means they have no need for stimulation from science fiction.

With the Cold War creating a constant state of tension, it can be understood why Bester considered a need for science fiction to address the 'big decisions' significant to the current political climate. What constitutes 'big decisions' in sf seems to be issues which affect society as a whole rather than the individual, such as who runs for galactic president. Implying a joke at the reader's expense, as the average reader would not actually make 'big decisions', Bester is examining individual helplessness in the face of large-scale events. Macro political decisions are thus prioritised over micro individual decisions. As a result, the question of what is significant enough to be considered of mass importance is raised. Similar to ideas of significance in 'The Men Who Murdered Mohammed', the hypertension of everyday life becomes minimised next to what is socially considered more important.[20]

Understanding the perplexities of the individual self is, according to Bester, the reason for science fiction, implying that these 'big decisions' and the scientific aspects of the genre should be utilised to encourage self-understanding rather than focusing on the scientific aspects themselves. Bester comments that science fiction should be delivered from 'scientific significance' and necessity to have 'purpose and value'. Instead, science fiction should utilise 'impractical speculation' in order to fuel 'emotional attitudes' (Bester, 'Renaissance Man', pp. 422, 423). Though Bester encourages speculation, he does so for the 'newness' of it, not necessarily its accuracy, instead preferring explore science's impact on the self rather than science itself.

'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' highlights Bester's position within the literary field and portrays his reasons for continuing to use the self as a main feature of his writing. By exploring sf's move from the pulpy 1930s to the (perceived) relatively more emotionally grounded (though occasionally still pulpy) sf of the 1950s, Bester's dedication to human behaviour as a staple of his work can be explored and understood. The destructive nature of conformity as discussed in Bester's works is mirrored by the science fiction genre as a whole as well as the

[20] Alfred Bester, 'The Men Who Murdered Mohammed', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 159-72. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.

particular feedback between literature and audience that can lead to this conformity. However, though a uniform approach to sf can lead to conformity, Bester implies that sf itself can encourage individualism. By allowing an outlet for the thinking man and encouraging an understanding of compulsive human behaviour, the readership could, in turn, be guided towards understanding themselves more fully through this reflection of humanity.

II.

Similar to 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man', Bester's guest editorial in *Venture* (March 1958) reiterated the need for mature sf which extrapolated future worlds unknown to modern man.[21] Bester's interest in the future lay in extrapolation based on 'the ideas of tomorrow, not of today or yesterday', which could explain Bester's interest in the long-term effects of psychology and the Cold War (Bester, 'Venturings', p. 4). By examining how the contemporary atmosphere would affect or create future societies, Bester is able to explore how those societies would then deal with these tensions. The two short stories published in 1958, for example, discuss conformity, technology, and war but do so in futuristic societies with little connection to contemporary reality, thus extrapolating potential psychological and social developments.

Speculation as a vehicle for the discussion of 'serious issues' allows for extrapolated renditions of potential situations, though their imaginary nature removes them from the realm of contemporary probability. However, Bester's commitment to humanity means his extrapolation of mankind is less unrealistic than the situations he places it in. Science fiction as speculation gives it an advantage over the mainstream, which would allow romanticised versions of reality but usually in an attempt to reaffirm contemporary American values.[22] *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), for example, does question corporate society and conformity in the workplace but its idealised version of contemporary life prevents the novel from being read solely as social criticism. For instance, United Broadcasting is criticised for only half-heartedly attempting to improve mental health and instead using their

[21] Alfred Bester, 'Venturings', *Venture Science Fiction Magazine*, vol. 2, no. 2, March 1958, pp. 4, 130. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[22] William Darby, *Necessary Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), p. 369.

programs just to make money. Satirising this, Sloan Wilson points out that it is cheaper for the company to acquire a reputation for doing good, without actually having to do any good.[23] However, the optimistic ending of the novel, wherein all of Tom and Betsy Rath's problems are neatly solved by *deus ex machina*, does more to bolster domestic family values than it does to excoriate the consumerist rat race. Bester writes in his editorial that speculative fiction can fall prey to the same trivialities by basing extrapolations 'on what was old and familiar', thus ignoring any far-reaching considerations ('Venturings', p. 4).

The process of 'predict[ing] the unsuspected' includes, according to Bester, an exploration of 'a future in which control of the mind and body will be answered by an unexpected development' ('Venturings', p. 130). Bester's two science fiction novels of the decade address this concern through psionics and the effect these 'unexpected developments' could be extrapolated to have on a society suffering from centuries of conformity, war, and the misunderstood self. Concepts found in *The Demolished Man* and *The Stars My Destination* embody this exploration of an 'unfamiliar future', thus demonstrating Bester's adherence to his own advice (Bester, 'Venturings', p. 130). More than just how telepathy or jaunting would affect social structures, Bester examines its impact on the people of that society and how human behaviour and emotion would function in a world dissimilar to our own.

While this editorial discussed the present state of science fiction rather than the atmosphere of 1950s' America, the concepts discussed represent wider ideas within society. Conformity, the need for originality, and a desire to understand how present reality can affect society's future are all considerations Bester undertakes and espouses. By examining how humans are meant to fit into a world designed around technology and politics, sf becomes able to explore sf tropes in conjunction with human characters rather than at their expense.

III.

Published in 1958, *Starburst* is a short story collection containing some of Bester's previous works, originally published between 1941 and 1954, as well as two original

[23] Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, intro. by Jonathan Franzen (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 28.

stories: 'The Die-Hard' and 'Travel Diary'.[24] 'The Die-Hard' examines the social extremes of conformity by exploring the merging of man and machine as previously discussed in 'Fondly Fahrenheit' and *The Stars My Destination*.[25] Reflecting this conformity, Bester literalises the phrase 'Tom, Dick, and Harry' by indicating that the male characters in this version of the future have one of these three names, and these names only. The redundancy and lack of specificity in the identification of individual people accentuates Bester's employment of naming techniques throughout the 1950s.

The protagonist, the Old One, is visited by a Tom while in the hospital. When that Tom leaves, he is replaced by another Tom who explains, '"I'm not the same Tom that was here before."' The Old One answers, '"You're all God-forsaken Toms"' (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 151). The focus on naming exemplifies the importance of external signifiers in enabling people to identify themselves and others. Tom tells the Old One that '"We're all different. You just can't see it"' (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 151). The difference which Tom is referring to is subtle variations in pronunciation between each 'Tom'. The Old One's inability to perceive the difference makes his position as external observer irrelevant, as he is unable to ascertain another's self and thus perceives them as 'other'. Thus, the Toms' acceptance of their perceived conformity stems from their ability to supposedly see each other's differences. Unable to exist in the current norms of society, the Old One's position underscores how unaware the other members of society are of their increasingly limited individuality.

The Old One's status as outsider and 'other' is also seen through his nominal identity. 'Old One' exemplifies both age and singularity, indicating that the Old One lived in a society where this level of conformity did not exist and that he alone (as far as the reader is aware) remembers or desires it. The prison-like hospital in which the Old One is kept, along with the possibility it is a mental institution rather than a medical hospital, demonstrates the removal of the 'other' from society as a form of social treatment, as seen with demolition or Gouffre Martel.[26] The Old One's

[24] Alfred Bester, 'The Die-Hard', in *Starburst*, pp. 148-52. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text; Alfred Bester, 'Travel Diary', in *Starburst*, pp. 110-13. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[25] Alfred Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 91-111.
[26] For a discussion on the treatment of those considered 'ill' by virtue of their individuality and the supposed 'cure' demanded by society, see Thomas S. Szasz, *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974).

condition as the only 'man' left in society places him firmly as 'other' as well as making him appear weak and fragile to other members of society. This is achieved not only through his otherness but through his determined avoidance of procedures designed to mechanise, and presumably prolong, mankind.

It is revealed that all men in this future world are '30 to 70 percent' mechanical (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 149). Society has essentially destroyed 'man' by making him technologically outdated. This fusion of man and machine mirrors the social machinery of conformity. Adam Piette refers to the entire Cold War as a machine designed to create a passive citizenry, which underscores the general air of conformity experienced throughout the period.[27] This mechanisation of man echoes Bester's assertions in 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' that society is too engrossed with concepts of the mechanics of humanity and here extrapolates that obsession to an eventual destruction of mankind as a defined species.

A loss of freedom through conformity reflects the supposed loss of humanity through mechanisation. Tom tells the Old One that '"In truth […], there is so much mingling of man in machine and machine in man that the distinction is hard to make. We no longer make it"'. Assimilation of technology into the body has thus surpassed any desire for a wholly organic mankind. The Old One exclaims that '"You are not men! You're machines! […] Robots! Monsters! You have destroyed man"'. To the Old One, it is society which is 'other', but as they are a collective majority, his view is not accepted. When questioned as to why he will not allow them to replace his body parts, the Old One responds, '"I will not become another Tom"' (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 150). Demonstrating the connections between physical conformity and identification, mechanisation becomes associated with a particular name. This name, as synonymous with 'machine', is implied to also be synonymous with 'robot' or 'monster'. By turning the self into a potentially feared object, connections can be drawn between technological advancement and fear, similar to reactions to nuclear weapons.

The Old One bemoans the current state of society to Tom by saying, '"How I yearn to see real life again…not your machine imitation"' (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 150). This comment can be applied to both the Old One's society and Bester's contemporary 1950s' society. The Old One is indeed surrounded by a machine

[27] Adam Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 212.

imitation of mankind and is thus not his idea of 'real life'. 1950s' society, in addition, would have contained new inventions and technologies which would have pervaded people's lives, such as television. Television especially could be seen as 'machine imitation' as the depictions of American life were an 'imitation' of daily living, echoing Allen Ginsberg's doubt regarding that which is shown on the TV screen. Regarding propagandistic assumptions regarding the Communist enemy, Ginsberg writes, 'America this is the impression I get from looking in / the television set', implying that what is seen on TV can easily be misleading as 'impression' does not equal fact.[28]

Tom claims that what has been destroyed is not man, but the evil found within them (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 149). As a result, it becomes unclear what makes man, man. By destroying the 'evil', they have also potentially destroyed the good; individuality and freedom of self. If ridding humanity of evil results in a conforming society, this would not allow the issue of conformity itself as being evil to be raised in any way. According to Sartre, conformity endorses 'common' freedom which cannot 'either realise […] individual freedoms' nor find a self 'which is common to all freedoms'. As a result, 'this untranscendable conflict between the individual and the common' simultaneously opposes and helps create one another, demonstrating the relationship between a conformed society and an individual self.[29]

Conformity within 'The Die-Hard' is also briefly considered in regards to war. '"In the old days," the Old One said, "there was the United States and Russia and England and Russia and Spain and England and the United States"' (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 148). The repetition of countries exemplifies their importance as well as echoing the repetition of Tom, Dick, and Harry and implying Fiona Kelleghan's discussion of madness.[30] When an alien envoy arrives, the Old One scoffs at their joyful reception:

> "In the old days […] we would have come with fire and storm. We would have marched down strange streets with weapons on our hips

[28] Allen Ginsberg, 'America', in *Howl and Other Poems,* ed. by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters, intro. by William Carlos Williams (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996), pp. 39-43 (p. 43, lines 109-10).
[29] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, ed. by Jonathan Rée, trans. by Alan Sheridan-Smith, 2 vols (London: NLB, 1976), I, *Theory of Practical Ensembles,*, pp. 582, 583.
[30] Fiona Kelleghan, 'Hell's My Destination: Imprisonment in the Works of Alfred Bester', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Nov. 1994), 351-64 (p. 360).

> and defiance in our eyes. Or if they came first we would have met them with strength and defiance. But not you."
>
> (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 151)

The alien envoy, described as having a praying mantis head, foreshadows the 'mantis heads' put on statues in 'They Don't Make Life Like They Used To' (1963).[31] The use of the praying mantis as a commentary on the devouring of others reflects the inhumanity of humanity, as seen in the Old One's declaration that the others are monsters and his insistence on violence towards the enemy, which echoes the heightened tension of war in the 1950s.

The Old One rushes to greet the envoy, saying, '"I alone *can* greet you"' (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 152. My emphasis added). By claiming this, the Old One implies that, if the envoy is to be greeted on Earth, it should be greeted by the only 'true' earthling. The Old One's claims that '"I'm the last man on earth"' firmly places him outside his contemporary reality as the cliché subverts the trope being used when there are in fact other members of society present (Bester, 'Die-Hard', p. 152). Additionally, it emphasises the Old One as the only wholly organic individual left, thus the only being perhaps still capable of being called a 'man'. The differences between the Old One's idea of war and the contemporary response demonstrates the changes conformity have caused as well as the lack of 'evil' which Tom believes mechanisation is responsible for having erased. The consideration then is whether conformity is worth the absence of such ideas as the Old One's or whether individuality is worth the presence of them.

Overall, 'The Die-Hard' examines the strength of individuality and the desire to maintain the self despite social pressures. The intermingling of man and machine brings to fruition ideas begun in Bester's earlier works concerning the mechanisation of man. By removing consideration for human behaviours or emotions, Bester's focus on technological satirises the obsessive interest with mechanics and the inorganic specialisation of the human body. The long-term effects of conformity, according to Bester, are shown to be capable of the eventual destruction of mankind as a distinct species. Reflecting contemporary usage of conformity, humanity in the

[31] Alfred Bester, 'They Don't Make Life Like They Used To', in *Virtual Unrealities,* pp. 191-224.

story has been destroyed by an internal enemy rather than an external one. Similar to discussions on McCarthyism, 'an augmentation of fear, distrust, and confusion, focused now on the domestic scene, gradually gave rise to the suspicion that the most immediate danger to American freedom was a homegrown phenomenon'.[32] The increasingly conformed, technology-based society which America was fostering during the 1950s is extrapolated into a wholly unknown society where this type of culture is exaggerated to exemplify its potential dangers, enabling Bester to examine these look long-term effects.

IV.

Similar to 'The Die-Hard', 'Travel Diary' also tackles issues of social conformity but rather than focusing on the lone dissenter, it examines those who have already accepted conformity. Irving Janis writes that the greater the camaraderie within a particular group, 'the greater is the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by groupthink'.[33] Despite specifically referring to groupthink, the concept can be applied to the Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s as a whole, especially in regards to Capitalism.

The characters in 'Travel Diary' display this groupthink Janis mentions by being seemingly unable to do anything new or independently. Considering their enthusiasm for these mindless activities, they are not only conforming, but happy in their conformity, thus contrasted to the Old One. The satirical portrayal of the tourist within the story consequently satirises Bester's writing for *Holiday*, drawing a connection between his fiction and his non-fiction and reiterating his self-referential approach to subverting tropes and clichés. Each diary entry is set up exactly the same regardless of which society is currently being visited. The characters only ever visit restaurants or bars where Clyde Pippin is playing and they only ever spend time with the Trumbulls and Rogers, who seem to be operating on the same itinerary as the narrator. When they arrive at a new location, the narrator inevitability spends money on luxuries such as dresses, lace, and a haircut. These luxuries are usually obtained

[32] Walter Shear, *The Feeling of Being: Sensibility in Postwar American Fiction* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 20.
[33] Irving Janis, 'Victims of Groupthink', in *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*, ed. by David P. Barash (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 30-35 (p. 33). Author's emphasis removed.

at a place suggested by a woman named Linda, indicating the narrator's inability to make her own decisions in regards to purchases and entertainment.

Additionally, the unknown, or 'other', seems to have been completely erased. The story's treatment of the English language best represents this. No matter where the narrator travels, the language spoken is English and the narrator's reaction indicates the social perception of this 'sameness'. When visiting Venus and Alpha Centaurus, the narrator mentions that 'Everybody speaks English so no trouble at all', while at Betelgeuse she considers it 'convenient' (Bester, 'Travel Diary', pp. 110, 111). The narrator's pleasure at not needing to speak or understand a foreign language devalues the concept of the 'travel diary' as, despite travelling, she is not experiencing any culture other than her own.

Regarding their 'time-trip to London', the narrator comments that 'Funniest thing about the trip is fact that we could hardly understand the people there. In 1665 they couldn't speak their own English' (Bester, 'Travel Diary', p. 112). This incident is the only time the characters encounter something which they are unfamiliar with. The English throughout the Solar System is offset by historical English, making society's past the 'other'. While this reflects the narrator's historical ignorance, it also shows an inability to accept or understand differences. The Solar System seems to have done away with these differences, thereby making them hard to come by and so all the more 'other' for their lack. The characters are so ensconced in the conformity of their age that anything different is not just strange but intolerable, evidencing America's reception of Soviets during the Cold War. Therefore, the specialisation of language has contributed to this conformed state by uniting individuals in speech and discouraging, to the point of extinction, those who speak differently.

When the narrator and her husband have the opportunity to take this 'time-trip', the historical event they travel to is the Great Fire of London. Ignorant of its historical importance, the narrator comments that 'Fire is just a fire', furthering the historical ignorance seen in her comments regarding the English language (Bester, 'Travel Diary', p. 112). This lack of awe for their own age reflects the ignorance for the history which led to it.[34] William Darby views *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*

[34] The opening to *The Stars My Destination* reflects this ignorance through the repetition of the Romantics' request for 'new frontiers' and 'high adventure', which underscores an ignorance of the

as demonstrating a similar view to history, which is reflected in its readership. 'Like most of the audience, [Tom Rath] wants to enjoy the creature comforts of an opulent time without constantly remembering either the historical or the personal costs of such an existence.'[35] As with the Toms in 'The Die-Hard', this minimal consideration for the past means a dislike of, or attempt to change, anything that is 'other', in an effort to maintain the conformed status quo.

The 'time-trip' to 1665 London also exemplifies the narrator's focus on purchasing luxury items. While in 1665, the narrator manages to buy 'heavenly' silver and china and 'divine' flatware (Bester, 'Travel Diary', p. 112). The descriptions of these commodities echoes that of the narrator's reaction to the omnipresent nature of the English language, linking consumerism with conformity. The ease with which these characters can travel through space and time should be awe-inspiring but the focus on commodities and conformed activities indicates that these material goods are more important than the experiences. The repetitive approach to the universe echoes the repetition Fiona Kelleghan associates with madness and neurotic characters. The repetitive purchasing of items and the repetitive nature of the items themselves causes their travels to have no defining feature, similar to the characters themselves.

The focus on commodities alludes to the consumer culture of mid-century America and the acquisition of social status through material goods. The consumer society post-World War II can be seen in advertising and mass consumption and is reflected in Bester's other works such as the commercial 'clans' in *The Stars My Destination*. This science fictionalisation of a consumer society is seen in other sf of the decade, including *The Space Merchants* (1952) and Frederik Pohl's 'The Midas Plague' (1954).[36] For example, Robert Sheckley's 'Cost of Living' (1952) opens with the protagonist's inability to understand Miller's suicide when Miller 'had everything to live for', including 'all the marvellous luxuries of the age'.[37] While authors such as Pohl had experience in the industry which they were satirising,

advent of jaunting and implies a sense of nostalgia that ignores scientific advancement as satirised in 'The Die-Hard'. Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, pp. 7-8.

[35] Darby, p. 338.

[36] Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth, *The Space Merchants* (London: Gollancz, 2003); Frederik Pohl, 'The Midas Plague', *Galaxy Science Fiction*, vol. 8, no. 1, April 1954, pp. 6-58.

[37] Robert Sheckley, 'Cost of Living', *Galaxy Science Fiction*, vol. 5, no. 3, December 1952, pp. 128-36 (p. 128).

Sheckley's fairly off-hand remark concerning the 'luxuries of the age' serves to reflect the general atmosphere of the 1950s' consumer society.

Demonstrating its pervasive nature within society, this remark portrays the casual acceptance that technological advancements are designed to better the quality of life. Miller's suicide thus serves to contrast the ubiquitous nature of technology with individual death, mirroring concerns over nuclear weapons. Ágnes Heller wrote that 'it is the *level* of consumption […] that becomes the source of cultural identification'. The number of items purchased by the narrator of 'Travel Diary' would seem to uphold this concept, especially as she only purchases items of which she knows other people will approve. Heller blames the mass media for this conformity by saying that 'everyone was manipulated into enjoying, being pleased with, and having a need for "the same", irrespective of whether "the same" referred to objects, products, forms of art, practices or whatever'.[38] Even in the private space of a diary entry, conformity is not commented on by any of the characters, implying the narrator not only enacts conformity, but believes in it.

Conformity is thus extrapolated to its fullest extent in this story by demonstrating it as encompassing the entire solar system. This conformity is not the result of a war directly occurring in the story but there is mention of a 'final World War' (Bester, 'Travel Diary', p. 110). The 'Great Galactic War', as the conflict is named, has since passed, but the continuation of the conformity presumably began during this crisis indicates a social acceptance of conformity which outlasts its immediate use during times when it is socially desired or required. The war is described as being the result of 'inevitable clashes' between 'conflicting cultures', which can be seen as an allusion to the contemporary conflict between America and the Soviet Union, with the story depicting potential long-term cultural consequences of the Cold War (Bester, 'Travel Diary', p. 111).

The 'conflicting cultures' are presumably erased from society as it appears only one culture, which speaks English, remains post-war. Though the end of war indicates that conflict has been dissolved, it appears to come at the cost of conformity, echoing earlier considerations as to whether violence should be erased at the cost of individualism. Whether a foreshadowing of World War III or a memory

[38] Ágnes Heller, 'Existentialism, Alienation, Postmodernism: Cultural Movements as Vehicles of Change in the Patterns of Everyday Life', in *A Postmodern Reader*, ed. by Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 497-509 (p. 505). Author's own emphasis.

of World War II, the implication of mass destruction remains clear. An increase in tourism despite this destruction could be seen as a satirical take on post-war US tourism to war-torn Europe, especially as a further satirising of *Holiday*. A large-scale erasure of other cultures echoes the ability of nuclear weaponry to methodically destroy other societies. William James comments that 'the intensely sharp competitive *preparation* for war by the nations *is the real war*'.[39] Pre-empting the concept of mutually assured destruction, this concept of preparation can be applied to the conformity within 'Travel Diary' and the consumerist 1950s from which it is extrapolated.

The stockpiling of luxury materials by the narrator can therefore be viewed as the narrator's preparation for her personal war to gain social acceptance. This preparation can be equated with the stockpiling of nuclear weapons for the Cold War as luxury goods and their positon as status symbols indicate a social war between classes, making these luxury goods a weapon of 'war'. Social war between citizens can be seen in the narrator's adherence to entertainment and luxury goods attended, and recommended, by other members of society.

William H. Whyte, Jr. considers the multiplicity of consumer choices to be the prime cause of this group approach to materialism. Whyte claims that, in the past, consumers made material decisions based on tradition but economic growth has resulted in so many buying choices that people have become unable to make their own decisions. As a result, they rely on the purchases of others to determine their own consumption.[40] This collective approach to socialising reinforces the narrator's approach to travel by ensuring her continued acceptance, no matter where in the Solar System she goes. The narrator's private thoughts on their activities appear to be in accordance with her public actions, making her internal self match her external. This harmony implies that masks would not be necessary in this future society, creating universal mental conformity to complement the universal physical conformity seen in 'The Die-Hard'.

This extrapolation furthers Bester's early intimations regarding the link between war and the destructive dangers of conformity. Hannah Arendt writes that the power of public disapproval can be so strong that the dissenter is inevitably

[39] William James, 'The Moral Equivalent of War', in *Approaches to Peace*, pp. 65-69 (p. 66). Author's own emphasis.
[40] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 314.

driven to 'either conformity or despair'.[41] Since the narrator of 'Travel Diary' is both conformed and happy, it can be inferred that conformity has saved her from despair, contrasted with the Old One who chose dissension and can be inferred to be miserable in his current situation. In both stories, the state of technology exceeds that of Bester's contemporary decade, but the social/scientific advancements in these works are not intended to be portrayed negatively. Their existence does not create this conformed nature but rather the uniformity of their utilisation and the disregard for any nuances in individual usage of, or reaction to, these technologies. The works as operating at opposing ends of the same discussion allows for an examination of the situation from both sides of conformity. The contrast between the two protagonists and the worlds they live in gives the reader the opportunity to consider Bester's extrapolations from both a negative and positive perception, thereby creating their own impressions of whether conformity is an acceptable substitute for the individuality lost within each story.

V.

Bester returns to the plight of the individual in 'The Men Who Murdered Mohammed' (*Fantasy & Science Fiction*, 1958). Rather than purely discussing the self in society, Bester utilises the trope of time travel to explore the importance of the individual in time and the social and personal aspects of existence. Beginning with a consideration of madness and sanity, the story couples the exploration of conformity and time with psychology. Continuing his focus on compulsive personalities, Bester introduces Henry Hassel as professor of Applied Compulsion whose office resides in the Psychotic Psenter. Hassel belongs to Unknown University, which is an institution full of 'eccentrics' and 'misfits' who are considered 'other' by mass society (Bester, 'Mohammed', p. 161). An institution of which only a particular type are members recalls the ivory tower of academics often criticised in mid-century America alongside the idea of elites often criticised by Bester.

Temporally dichotomising the social and the personal, the story aims to separate the individual experience of time from the mass experience of time. Hassel

[41] Hannah Arendt, 'The Threat of Conformism', in *Essays in Understanding: 1930-1954, Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1994) pp. 423-27 (p. 425).

comments that ‘Time is a private matter’, therefore implying it to be immune to conformity, as one’s experience of the self and the world becomes inherently separate from others. Israel Lennox, another time-traveller, furthers this concept when he explains to Hassel that ‘time is entirely subjective. It’s […] a personal experience. There is no such thing as objective time’ (Bester, ‘Mohammed’, pp. 165, 171). However, as with many other aspects of the self, though it is of one’s own making and individual experience, it can be influenced by external forces.

Lennox explains that while man may exist in, and be affected by, society, he is inherently not a part of it due to the nature of his place in time. This appears to lend credence to Gully Foyle’s discovery that while one has a responsibility to society, they should still be able to retain an original self. The position of the individual within society is mirrored by the placement of the self in collective time. The story claims that ‘“There are only billions of individuals, each with his own continuum; and one continuum cannot affect the others. […] Each of us must travel up and down his strand alone”’ (Bester, ‘Mohammed’, p. 171). While the world is experienced by all, it is experienced differently by different individuals. An inability to affect the time-streams of others means each person can be said to live in a hermetic universe of their own creation, making conformity a social event created through individual decisions. This means that each member of a collective, though influenced by other members, has at some point made the internal decision to conform, even if subconsciously.

The irrevocable link between the individual and their existence in time indicates a cause and effect relationship between the self and the wider world. Recalling Ray Bradbury’s ‘A Sound of Thunder’ (1952), Bester plays with this trope of chain reactions through time when Lennox mentions that he accidentally killed a Pleistocene insect and feared the changes this would wreak.[42] Finding it has no effect on the modern world, he realises that the world as a whole exists externally to each individual within that world. It is implied that destruction of one’s place in time equals destruction of the self but would have no effect on external society. The more damage Hassel does to the history of his time line, the more he erases himself from existence. Lennox comments that ‘“With each act of destruction we dissolved a little. Now we’re gone”’ (Bester, ‘Mohammed’, p. 172). Lennox and Hassel, by destroying

[42] Ray Bradbury, ‘A Sound of Thunder’, in *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 135-50.

their timelines, have destroyed themselves and become ‘insubstantial’. Society, however, continues without them, as if not even noticing their loss. This removal of the self from society has both cemented these men as ‘other’ and caused the ‘other’ to cease to exist, as society is no longer aware of them.

Hassel’s ignorance of his dilemma is depicted when he speaks to George Washington and witnesses his past self murder the Colonel. He attempts to get his own attention but ‘Hassel paid no attention to himself; indeed, he did not appear to be aware of himself’ (Bester, ‘Mohammed’, p. 167). The expected position of the self as an internal construct means an inability to reconcile this knowledge with the appearance of an external manifestation, as seen with Reich and Foyle’s inability to recognise their external versions. Allowing the self to be constructed by society could lead to the creation of an external self, hence the resulting identity crisis as the internal and external selves are experienced as separate entities rather than aspects of the same individual. It is this splintering of the self which leads to Hassel’s ignorance of his own identity.

Hassel’s lack of awareness indicates not only his diminishing existence but emphasises his dearth of knowledge regarding the effect he is having on himself. Hassel has effectively unhinged himself from time and space and detached his self from any social existence. This is demonstrated when he begins travelling through time and space of his own will without the use of a time machine and ‘went home without walking’, therefore divorcing the self from any mechanisation, similar to jaunting (Bester, ‘Mohammed’, p. 168). Without an anchor to ground him, in this case, a solid position in his own time stream, Hassel’s self continues to exist but in a divorced state from reality, representing the potentially repressed psychological state of many identity crises as well as the implications of conformity’s effect on the self.

Hassel’s disintegration of the self affects not only his body but his mind as well, making him forgetful and unaware of himself. Lennox claims that ‘“The past is like memory. When you erase a man’s memory, you wipe him out, but you don’t wipe out anybody else’s”’ (Bester, ‘Mohammed’, p. 171). Reaffirming the link between a person’s place in time and their identity, Lennox’s comment also connects mental and physical identity. Similarly seen in ‘By His Bootstraps’ (1941) regarding the protagonist’s multiple selves, Robert Heinlein writes that ‘The only thing that

bound them together into a feeling of identity was continuity of memory'.[43] The destruction of time, as related to memory, equates to a destruction of the mental self, while the dissolution of Hassel into a ghost equates to a destruction of the physical self. Memory, as an inherently subjective concept, aligned with history, causes the past to be subjective as well, hence Lennox's assertion that there is no such thing as objective time. Reiterating the idea that man exists in society but not of society, this further demonstrates society's ability to continue even when individuals disappear. Since society relies on large quantities of individuals for its existence, the absence of a single self does not affect the whole, thereby signifying society's ability to practice conformity despite individualism.

Loss of self through conformity is linked to the Cold War, or mass conflict, in this story through Bester's consideration of the psychological and sociological connections within society. A desire for mechanised war is mirrored in Hassel's compulsion to build a time machine and erase his wife from history for having an affair rather than confronting her himself. Machines are thus preferred over human conflict, reflecting Bester's discussion in 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' concerning the importance placed on machines over humanity. When Hassel makes an important discovery regarding the nature of time, he insists on speaking to the leading authority on the subject. Lennox, the previous expert on time, is declared dead, though later revealed to be in the same state Hassel comes to. Hassel is instead directed to Wiley Murphy, who turns out to be the man Hassel saw with his wife, and therefore the cause of Hassel's journey through time. Rather than becoming angry, he attempts to separate his wife from Murphy, but not on grounds of having been betrayed. Instead, he only now directly interferes because he desires Murphy's attention on a scientific matter. Again, science has been prioritised over human behaviour and emotions, specifically as a result of the passive-aggressive nature of Hassel's own psychology; passive aggression itself being a type of defence mechanism, impelled by anxiety as a way to defend against painful 'affects'.[44]

Hassel's initial attempts to alter time fail and he realises that a significant act with a 'mass-action effect' is required in order to induce change (Bester, 'Mohammed', p. 163). Regarding an individual's effect on their personal time-

[43] Robert Heinlein, 'By His Bootstraps', in *The Menace From Earth* (London: Corgi, 1973), pp. 49-115 (p. 107).
[44] Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (London: Karnac Books, 1992), p. 62.

strand, every act is personally significant as they all alter the self in some way. Lennox and Hassel's decision to murder famous historical figures, through the assumption that their deaths would preclude their historic achievements, underscores the difference between social and individual importance. Christopher Columbus, for example, may be an American icon socially, but the story acknowledges that, even without him, the New World would still have been discovered. Edward James writes that 'The very act of labelling some events or some individuals as "crucial" or "significant" implies that, without them, the outcome would have been different'.[45] For Lennox and Hassel, the only outcome that differs is their continued existence. Due to the lack of a universal continuum only the individual to whom an altered timeline belongs will experience those alterations, regardless of how significant these changes may be deemed socially.

Hassel determines that to kill his wife with a significant act he must '"Wipe it all out"', which leads him to nuclear weapons. Hassel travels to Paris to teach Madame Curie nuclear fission and has 'the satisfaction of seeing Paris go up in a mushroom of smoke' (Bester, 'Mohammed', p. 164). Contrasting the Cold War policy of stockpiling weapons in order to prevent their use, this incident indicates a difference in approaches to war between the 1950s and the turn of the twentieth century, similar to the differences between the Old One's and Tom's reaction to the alien envoy in 'The Die-Hard'.

However, the destruction of Paris also demonstrates the destructive power of nuclear weapons and lends credence to the policy of keeping nuclear secrets private. By teaching Madame Curie nuclear fission, Hassel is under the assumption that the use of nuclear weapons will cause enough death and destruction to prevent his wife from existing. Hassel fails to recognise that he would most likely not exist either, though this is irrelevant considering the nature of time Bester has proposed in this story. Hassel exhibits no interest in whether it would be better to prevent the discovery of nuclear weapons rather than encourage their development, indicating how firmly nuclear weapons have entered the public mind and their status as taken for granted, similar to war itself throughout Bester's work.

The desire to protect nuclear secrets is explored in the story when Hassel visits Enrico Fermi. In questioning Fermi about Madame Curie's discovery of

[45] Edward James, 'The Limits of Alternate History', *Vector: The Critical Journal of the British Science Fiction Association*, 254 (November/December 2007), 7-10 (p. 7).

nuclear fission, Fermi cries, '"We are the first, and we are not there yet. Police! Police! Spy!"' (Bester, 'Mohammed', p. 167). The race for technological superiority reflects the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union while Fermi's cries of 'spy' echo the censure of J. Robert Oppenheimer regarding his Communist sympathies and work on the Manhattan Project.[46]

The incident with Fermi echoes Bester's own reality of 1957 with the Soviet Union's successful launch of Sputnik I. M. L. Dockrill comments that 'These demonstrations of Soviet technological expertise were bitter blows to United States pride and to her confidence in her prowess in this field'.[47] Gallup poll results from 1959 show the launch's effect on the public as the majority of people surveyed world-wide considered the United States to be dropping behind Russia in regards to military power.[48] Fermi's exclamation that they are the first indicates an assertion in the way time is meant to progress and a denial of Hassel's ability to inflict individual change. Edward James refers to the opinion of professional historians in stating that 'historical change is not a matter of individual decisions but the result of impersonal social and economic developments which cannot be changed or set in a different direction by individuals'.[49] This view favours collective history over individual history and explains why Bester may consider individual experience to be overlooked in favour of mass experience.

Being included in history can be seen as a prerequisite to being included in history books. Otherwise, one may risk exclusion from social memory, which, as Lennox has stated, is akin to being wiped from the past and ceasing to exist. The importance of social history is acknowledged when Hassel shoots Fermi and 'awaited arrest and immolation in newspaper files'. Hassel's decision to 'go on record' reflects the importance of a recorded, social construction of time which disregards individual accounts of temporal experience (Bester, 'Mohammad', p. 167). In writing history, James asserts that 'there cannot be sources for things that never happened'.[50] However, the absence of a source does not necessitate the

[46] Ellen Schrecker, 'McCarthyism and the Red Scare', in *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, ed. by Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 371-84 (p. 379).
[47] M. L. Dockrill, *The Cold War: 1945-1963* (Basingstoke: Macmillian Education, 1988), p. 72-73.
[48] George H. Gallup, '1959', in *The Gallup Poll: Public opinion, 1935-1971*, ed. by William P. Hansen, Fred L. Israel, and June Rephan, 3 vols (New York, NY: Random House, 1972), III, pp. 1585-648 (p. 1597).
[49] James, 'The Limits of Alternate History', p. 9.
[50] James, 'The Limits of Alternate History', p. 9.

absence of an event, for its source could have been destroyed or forgotten, thus erasing the event through erasure of associated memory. Misremembering past events or forgetting them altogether creates an alternate history of one's memorial past in which they then exist and believe. With each alternate history being real to the person who exists within it, this can be seen as an individual experience of Hugh Everett's 'many-worlds interpretation'.[51] Thus, despite social perceptions, Hassel's memory of the alterations he has committed in his timeline make them irreversibly true in his reality.

The reliance on official documents to understand history of which one was not personally present means a certain level of trust that those events have been accurately recorded. A perversion of information in order to alter understanding or perception can be seen in the employment of propaganda. Bester repeatedly returns to this by demonstrating the individual struggle to place oneself in time when the 'official' records do not match personal knowledge. The insistence that Lennox is dead, for example, does more than place his individual timeline outside collective time; it also acts to falsify his experience. The equation between memory and history within the story explores how history is created. In comparing murders, Hassel finds that he and Lennox killed many of the same individuals, due to their separate timelines, but despite these compounding deaths, they continued to survive in the history books. Hassel's murdering of historical figures such as Washington, Columbus, Napoleon, and Mohammed, among others, makes these deaths true for him but not historically. The AI in the Library insists they not only survived but performed their prescribed historical role, indicating the individual's predetermined level of social significance regardless of personal desire or action.

The dual nature of time can be expanded to include nuclear weapons as the quickness with which they could be used (as in Paris) means that the passage of time between existing prior to their usage and the destruction after their usage would be minimal. Creating a perpetual state wherein humanity both exists and is made extinct, the threat would always be imminent; equally likely to occur and likely not to. The suspended stasis in which the United States would have existed in the early Cold War years, always under the shadow of the atom bomb but not yet being destroyed by it, mirrors Hassel's dual existence at the end of the story.

[51] Hugh Everett, '"Relative state" formulation of quantum mechanics', *Reviews of Modern Physics*, vol. 29, no. 3 (July 1957), 454–62.

By existing both in time and outside of it, Hassel embodies a state of quantum superposition, in which he exists in his knowledge of himself but is perceived to have died by the rest of society. Hassel's self could be seen as both alive and dead as, mentally, his consciousness continues to exist, but physically, it has been destroyed. Hassel and Lennox therefore exist in a literal and figurative state of limbo, between their perceptions of themselves and society's perception of them. Thus, they exist in an identity crisis which rests not on the psychological self but on its physical location in time and space, hence Hassel's lack of self recognition. If time were objective, Hassel's altering would have altered time collectively and his death would have been unequivocal rather than depending on the position of the observer. This quality of the self both existing and not can also be equated to the state of the conformed individual, as they are simultaneously an individual and a member of the masses.

As such, Bester's approach to time and the individual's place within it argues a natural, partial overlap of the social and the personal but cautions the destructive results of attempting to unite the two as a single entity. The separation of temporal continuums shows the innate nature of the self as operating within, but still separate from, mass society. What Bester's work seems to contend is that the idea that the individual can only exist when conformed to society is an erroneous view which takes advantage of anxiety over social dislocation in order to encourage conformity over individuality. Rather, Bester seems to be arguing for a careful balancing of the social and the individual, as both a collectivist society and individual isolation are depicted as equally capable of destruction.

What 'The Men Who Murdered Mohammed' further explores, as initiated in 'The Die-Hard', is the long-term effects of society and time on the individual, as an all-encompassing source of external pressure. Bester's utilisation of time as an unalterable force which acts upon the individual demonstrates the position of the individual as both within and without a social temporal collective. The isolated nature of the individual's timeline represents the perceived inability of the individual to exhibit any agency over their social environment. The move from the internal identity crisis to the external does not negate Bester's earlier thoughts on the psychological effects of society but rather demonstrates an expansion of what identity is and how it can be affected, both physically and mentally. The prioritisation of science over the human reflects Bester's discussions within his

editorial and essay and connects his fiction with his non-fiction by demonstrating the progression and utilisation of his own assertions. The self's destruction through uniformed, unchecked usage of technology and the slow mechanisation of humanity through machines and commodities demonstrates the insidious ability of time to create gradual changes through social constructs.

6. ‘Confus[ing] art with artifice’: The advertised self and compulsive patterns, 1959-1960

I.

Bester’s work of the late 1950s combines elements of bureaucracy, universal compulsions, and the commodification of the self to examine anxieties regarding advertising and the authentic self. ‘Will You Wait?’ and Bester’s interview with John Huston lay down groundwork for the self as commodity through two different mediums and genres – science fiction short story and non-fiction interview. Examining these themes in more depth, *Tender Loving Rage* combines these elements in a novel focused mainly on the psychology of the self within the television/advertising industry.[1] These explorations reflect wider concerns regarding these themes, such as Vance Packard’s *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957), which examines advertising’s ability to manipulate consumers, and *Catch-22* (1961), which examines the fate of the individual controlled by mass bureaucracy.[2]

Published in *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, ‘Will You Wait?’ (1959) satirises the relationship between the individual and corporations. Selling oneself as a commodity is explored through the story’s depiction of a man’s attempts to sell his soul to the Devil. The Devil is referred to by multiple names, making him difficult to track down and his work in a corporate lawyer’s office couples the multiplicity of identities with large corporations. Along with the Devil, many Angels also work at law firms, indicating that even religion has gone corporate. How busy these corporations are with requests demonstrates how in demand their services are and the increasing difficulty with which they may be reached, indicating corporate procedures are perhaps more labyrinthine than they are worth. With everything now

[1] Alfred Bester, ‘Will You Wait?’, in *Virtual Unrealities: The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester*, intro. by Robert Silverberg (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), pp. 225-32. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text. Alfred Bester, ‘John Huston’s Unsentimental Journey’, in *Redemolished*, ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 480-92. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text. Alfred Bester, *Tender Loving Rage*, intro. by Harry Harrison (Houston, TX: Tafford Publishing, 1991). All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text. The title will be abbreviated as *TLR*.

[2] Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960); Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (London: Vintage Books, 1994). Roger Luckhurst writes that ‘Packard argued that advertisers were “engineering consent” through the use of “mass psychoanalysis”’. Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 111.

a matter of business rather than spiritual interaction, the self is no longer private, as the public movement of the protagonist's contract between offices indicates.

When the Devil is finally contacted regarding the protagonist's soul, he asks for a presentation to prove the soul's worth, referring to the soul as 'The Property' and the presentation as 'The Sell' (Bester, 'Will You Wait?', p. 227). Planned obsolescence in industry could explain the Devil's hesitancy over the quality of the soul as the risk of it being replaced by something newer and better would deflate the value of his purchase. Babette B. Tischleder and Sarah Wasserman write that the consumer culture in post-war America 'fetishize[d] the new' but that, despite replacements, what became outmoded continued to linger and shape future notions.[3] This concept relates to more than just the exploration of commodities, as it could also be applied to identity. Despite different names or masks, previous identities are shown by Bester to linger beneath the current self and continue to shape identity.

Equating the Devil with consumerism reflects his position within a corporate setting. 'Twentieth-century diabolism is slick and streamlined, like jukeboxes and automatic elevators and television and all the other modern efficiencies that leave you helpless and infuriated' (Bester, 'Will You Wait?', p. 225). This satire of capitalist bureaucracy echoes similar examinations in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* of the inability to get anything done in a modern 'efficient' world. Roseline Intrater points out the 'absurdity of bureaucratic organization' within *Catch-22* and its function of destroying individual identity, mainly in regards to the 'soldier in white' and the interchangeability of the individual due to bureaucratic mishandling of personal identity.[4] Bester's literary context further contains these considerations, such as within the works of Mickey Spillane, which William Darby explains contain scenes of 'bureaucratic inefficiency'. Darby comments that these scenes provide 'a vicarious satisfaction for the audience', as the protagonist, Mike Hammer, along with the majority of the reading audience, resents 'bureaucrats who don't function'.[5] Darby's assessment demonstrates that not only was Bester examining capitalist

[3] Babette B. Tischleder and Sarah Wasserman, 'Introduction: Thinking out of Sync, A Theory of Obsolescence', in *Cultures of Obsolescence: History, Materiality, and the Digital Age,* ed. by Babette B. Tischleder and Sarah Wasserman (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2015), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).
[4] Roseline Intrater, *An Eye for an "I": Attrition of the Self in the Existential Novel* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 106.
[5] William Darby, *Necessary Fictions: Popular Literature of the 1950s* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), pp. 13, 14.

bureaucracy among an atmosphere of similarly-minded authors, but readers enjoyed such works as mimetic representations of society.

The connection within 'Will You Wait?' between technology and inefficiency satirises the assumption of mimesis in works of fiction through the unrealistic and unoriginal nature of television. Reflecting Bester's own experiences writing for television, the difference between television's portrayal of reality and the narrator's reality is seen when the narrator states he took a job with a television network. 'At least once a week a script would come in about a bargain with the Devil that was signed, sealed and delivered before the opening commercial.' In contrast, the narrator has waited seven months for his contract to be signed and by the end of the story, he is still waiting (Bester, 'Will You Wait?', p. 229). In this case, art is not imitating life. Television and its programming is operating far quicker than individuals can, implying that humans themselves are becoming obsolete.[6]

Legal proceedings in the story have been protracted to the point that the narrator has barely enough money left to appeal the denial of the contract. When the narrator is demoted, he states that he 'seriously contemplated suicide', However, he decides not to since his 'soul was in jeopardy in an arbitration' (Bester, 'Will You Wait?', p. 231). Legal considerations have thus taken precedent over personal ones. The external ownership of an internal concept demonstrates how much the inner self can belong to others either through conformity and restraint or responsibility and duty, as Bester examines in *The Stars My Destination*.[7] However, the soul belonging to the Devil through a contract indicates self-commodification and willing self-surrender.

The narrator discovers that the Devil would gain exclusive ownership of his soul after he dies. As a result, life after death would consist of 'eternal, agonizing self-indictment', which he compares to 'a hideous session with a psychoanalyst'. The revelation of his psychology is presented as being worse than the conventional description of Hell and the narrator states that he would '"rather have inhuman fiends torturing [him]"'. In response, the Devil claims that '"They can't compare to man's inhumanity to himself"', which can be understood on both a personal and

[6] For a further discussion of this, see Bill Brown's discussion of Philip K. Dick's use of a fixation on objects of the past to contrast with the advancement of the human. Bill Brown, 'Prelude: The Obsolescence of the Human', in *Cultures of Obsolescence*, pp. 19-38 (pp. 29-32).
[7] Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination*, ed. by Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, intro. by Neil Gaiman (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).

social level (Bester, 'Will You Wait?', p. 229). Man's misunderstanding of his self and the self of others can lead to anxiety by furthering the concept of the 'other', while nuclear weapons would explain mass implications of man's inhumanity to himself. In addition, protagonists such as Jordan Lennox emphasise the self-destructive nature of repression, making himself his own worst enemy, thus literally portraying his inhumanity to himself.

These social fears are depicted in the fear of the 'other' as related to Communism and is seen when the narrator stops the Devil on the street to discuss his contract. 'When I spoke to him he got a little frightened, thinking I was a Communist or worse' (Bester, 'Will You Wait?', p. 230). For even the Devil to be afraid of Communists demonstrates the level of anxiety and fear surrounding them. The phrase 'or worse', however, implies that there are things more dangerous to American society than Communism. While this could refer to nuclear war, it could also be an unknown 'other', as the very notion of the 'other' is enough to incite fear or suspicion.

By satirising the narrator's attempts to sell his soul, Bester suggests the lengths to which individuals will go to have their selves accepted by society and the inherent difficulty in doing so. Overall, this short story can be seen as literalising the metaphor of selling the self. That the narrator persists despite bureaucratic inefficiency establishes the strong desire for wealth and success in a society that would seem to require commodification of the self in order to acquire such things. The self is thus no longer obtaining goods, but is now a good itself. Merging the consumer and consumed portrays the extent of consumer society and reinforces Bester's examination of the fluidity and production of the self through advertising.

II.

Implications regarding the influence of consumerism are continued in Bester's interview with director John Huston. A mainstream publication for *Holiday*, 'John Huston's Unsentimental Journey' (1959) discusses originality in art. Bester considers Huston to be an 'original' 'In a Packaging Age when all women look as though they have the same mother, and all men conform to the Ivy League denominator' ('John Huston', p. 481). These descriptors reflect the stereotypes discussed in *Who He?* and imply a factory-produced self, reflecting ideas of

automation and conformity.[8] The self as commodity can be seen in the increase of self-help books within the decade, such as Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), with William H. Whyte Jr. referring to texts aimed at self-improvement as an 'American staple'.[9] This universal approach to personal analysis enables the populace to be improved in a conformed manner, encouraging ideas of self-help as akin to a therapeutic assembly line.

The artifice of presenting the self as a commodity is reiterated when Huston refers to the perception and originality of painting as 'piercing through the artifices of life' (Bester, 'John Huston', p. 491). However, objects can be represented to the viewer in ways which may or may not be mimetic, reflecting the often inauthentic representation of the self to society. An example would be Rene Magritte's 'The Treachery of Images' (1928-29) in which an image of a pipe is supplied with the caption '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*' (This is not a pipe).[10] The painting is both mimetic and yet not, therefore inviting discussions on the reproducibility of authenticity.

Continuing concerns in 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man', Bester questions Huston concerning the duality of hack writers determined to please audiences at the cost of 'honest craft'.[11] '"What about the question of public taste? We hear so many stories about studios' trying to make good pictures but being forced to make bad ones because that's the only kind the public will buy."' Huston responds by saying, '"Unfortunately, the taste for garbage can be developed like a taste for olives"' (Bester, 'John Huston', p. 488). Thus, the development of tastes depends on a feedback loop between society and production. Individuals may only end up asking for what they know they can get in their products, which is only produced because it is deemed to be what society wants.

Referring to filmmaking, Huston comments that films, as art, must reflect the inner self of the individual, despite their ability to portray or reflect artifice. If not, it is not the art of a filmmaker, and by not being art, it can be surmised to be artifice. He comments that filmmaking must '"correspond to what we unconsciously know to be the psychological truth"' (Bester, 'John Huston', pp. 483-484). As such, psychology and the unconscious self are contrasted with artifice, making the inner

[8] Alfred Bester, *Who He?* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, [n.d.]).
[9] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 252; Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (London: Vermilion, 2012).
[10] René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images,* 1928-1929, oil on canvas, 63.5 × 93.98 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.
[11] Alfred Bester, 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man', in *Redemolished*, pp. 408-30.

self a point of truth and thus separate from the staged selves which individuals may sell to society. Tony Soma, Huston's father-in-law, conveys an anecdote of Huston talking politely to him while simultaneously drawing an 'evil' picture of Soma (Bester, 'John Huston', p. 490). The duality between what Huston says and what he does reflects his dual nature by emphasising the difference between the external self and the internal self, which can be kept private and thus contain more authentic thoughts and opinions. These comments coming from someone other than Bester indicates a wider realisation of this lack of self-knowledge and a rising awareness within the public regarding the workings of psychology and its relation with the individual. That these opinions are shared is not significant in of itself but Bester's decision to focus on and emphasise these observations demonstrates the consistency of his approach to the subject and his particular utilisation of these themes.

Considerations discussed in this interview of art and artifice are carried through the rest of the decade and Bester's increased output of non-sf can be seen as an attempt to continue his ideas outside an sf framework. The audience's ability to distinguish between art and artifice is just as important as the ability of the individual producing it to recognise whether what they are creating is one or the other, which Philip K. Dick later examines in *The Man in the High Castle* (1962).[12] However, this may depend on the originality and authenticity within the individual themselves, as seen with Huston's discussion of originality over artifices. However, the self presented to society may need to match the authentic self in order to be in a position to recognise this authenticity in others. The utilisation of an interview to examine concepts similarly found in other mediums demonstrates the various outlets available to the discussion of psychology as well as indicating that they are actively being debated.

III.

In September 1959, an issue of *Fantasy and Science Fiction* was published in which Robert P. Mills invited readers to play a guessing game regarding anonymous

[12] Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (London: Gollancz, 1975). An example would be *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, which is both art and artifice but is more truthful than the author realises considering the base assumption that the Axis powers lost WWII.

submissions.[13] The four short stories put forth in the contest, called the 'Quintet', were designed to play upon authorial identification. Mills writes that 'At least one […] was written by a child under 12; at least one was written by either Damon Knight, Jane Rice, Theodore Sturgeon, or Alfred Bester'. As an explanation to the guessing game, the introduction establishes the duality between adults and children. 'The imaginative eye of a child sees without the blinders of culture or sophistication, and the result […] is a fresh and different kind of art which an adult cannot easily duplicate… Or can he?'.[14] The concept of duplication recognises the gap between art and artifice. If a writer's style can identify them, but can also be duplicated, then identifying that writer becomes more difficult, as their identity becomes reproducible. Identity therefore loses its originality through duplication.

'Blinders' ensure that an individual only sees a particular portion of society, implying that individuals require them in order to avoid the stresses of modern life. If children are less blinded by culture or sophistication, then they are less institutionalised and thus less conformed. Richard Cándida Smith questions whether 'American institutions promoted or stifled individual creativity'. Smith claims that the publication of Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' (1955) complemented opinions that American society tended to repress individual creativity.[15] If children have yet to become indoctrinated into 'American institutions', then it follows that they have not yet had their creativity stifled by them either.

By being in contrast with adults, it is further suggested that if children are not blinded by 'American institutions', then in contrast, adults must be. If adults can replicate a child's writing, then either they excel at presenting an artificial self in society or they are not as blinded as the introduction implies. However, if the writers involved in this game are able to pass themselves off as children, they must have been creative enough to inject sufficient artifice into their art in order to fool the reader. As such, clear-cut ideas about identification become muddled. Bester's attempt to write like a child reveals his own perceptions on how to identify a child author and what he believes are the audience's expectations. Bester makes what he

[13] Robert P. Mills, 'Quintet', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 1959, p. 50.
[14] Mills, p. 50.
[15] Richard Cándida Smith, 'A Generation in Miniature', in *A New Literary History*, ed. by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), pp. 861-65 (p. 864); Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*, ed. by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996).

assumes to be childish mistakes in his writing, yet his story is the only one to do so, meaning that the story actually written by the child does not make these mistakes. The culture or sophistication gap which Mills mentions could explain this inability to identify with children and why Bester would expect his adult readers to make the same misidentification.

Bester previously stylistically experimented with his assumptions about a child's writing in 'Star Light, Star Bright'.[16] In that story, Stuart Buchanan writes an essay for school which contains grammatical and spelling errors similar to those seen in Bester's story published in the 'Quintet', titled 'The Black Nebulea'.[17] Buchanan's essay contains sentences such as: '*My frend Gorge bilds modell airplanes*.' The most distinctive quality of these purposeful misspellings is the adding and removing of particular letters. This pattern is repeated in both stories, as is the purposeful swapping of letters such as in 'gohsts' in 'The Black Nebulea' and 'nihgt' in 'Star Light, Star Bright' (Bester, 'Black Nebulea', p. 51).[18] With the repetition of these stylistic approaches to 'childish' writing, Bester allows himself to be identified even when he is specifically attempting not to be himself, which echoes Bester's discussion within 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' regarding writing as an authorial mirror.

A discerning reader of 'The Black Nebulea' could thus identify the work as Bester's due to similarities with his earlier 'childlike' writing. Larry McCaffery comments that authorial 'signatures' collectively denote a writer's 'vision' and that these are clearly seen in Bester's works.[19] 'Alfred Bester', as a name attached to a story, places the reader in a position to expect that story to be similar to other works attached to that name. Leslie Flood's reference to *Tiger! Tiger!* as 'pure Bester' implies that Bester's works have an innate quality which signify him as the author.[20] Bester's 'false' identity consequently contains his real identity and the dichotomy between the presented self and real self only serves to reinforce his authorial style.

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[16] Alfred Bester, 'Star Light, Star Bright', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 38-55.
[17] Alfred Bester, 'The Black Nebulea', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 1959, pp. 50-51. All obvious misspellings in 'The Black Nebulea' are the intention of the author. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[18] Bester, 'Star Light, Star Bright', pp. 47, 46.
[19] Larry McCaffery, 'An Interview with William Gibson', in *Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Science Fiction*, ed. by Larry McCaffery (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 263-85 (p. 275).
[20] Leslie Flood, 'Review: *Tiger! Tiger!*', *New Worlds Science Fiction*, vol. 17, no. 50, 1956, pp. 126-28 (p. 128); Alfred Bester, *Tiger! Tiger!* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967; repr. 1974).

Bester's repression of his real identity for 'The Black Nebulea' was therefore not fully successful. This implies that more permanent repressions of identity, such as those Bester explores throughout his works, would be just as unsuccessful and ultimately result in the identity crises portrayed by his characters.

Not only did Bester adjust his writing style for the 'Quintet', he published under the name 'Sonny Powell'. Reflecting Jordan Lennox's false names in *Who He?*, this use of a pseudonym indicates the ease with which nominal identity can be altered. Sonny, as a play on an affectionate term for a child, furthers Bester's attempts to trick his readers by associating himself with a child in as many aspects as possible. Naming as an external identifier, coupled with a writing style intended to mimic the internal workings of a child's mind, connects the internal and external of Bester's false-self creation.

Buck Sullivan, the protagonist of 'The Black Nebulea', sometimes has his name spelled Buck Sulivan, echoing the mistakes discussed earlier (Bester, 'Black Nebulea', pp. 51, 50). It is obvious that this inconsistency is meant to mirror the kind of mistakes Bester would expect a child to make. However, with Bester having made his mistakes purposefully, this inability to get one's name right feeds back into the associations between naming and identity. Spelling being all that is needed to differentiate between individuals echoes the pronunciations of 'Tom' in 'The Die-Hard'.[21] The nominal association with Buck Rogers may imply a supposed childish idolisation of the hero through the presumption that children would be familiar with his appearances in comics and cartoons.[22]

Though the story itself does not explore identity, Bester's approach reflects previous examinations. Buck Sullivan is unable to tell the difference between himself and the ghosts of the planet he visits, as he fails to realise that they are the same. Sullivan's exchange with a woman on the planet indicates his confusion: 'If you are all dead how come I can see you and she said Becaus you are a gohst to?' (Bester, 'Black Nebulea', p. 51). Sullivan's inability to recognise himself as dead shows either a failure to understand his own identity or how much an individual's identity may rely on confirmation from others. Echoing Henry Hassel's situation at

[21] Alfred Bester, 'The Die-Hard', in *Starburst* (New York, NY: New American Library of World Literature, 1958), pp. 148-52.
[22] In particular, Warner Bros.' amalgamation of Daffy Duck and Buck Rogers into Duck Dodgers in 1953 may explain any increased association the character might have with child fans of sf, as well as how an sf concept could perhaps reach a mainstream cartoon audience. *Duck Dodgers In The 24½th Century*, dir. by Charles M. Jones (Warner Bros., 1953).

the end of ‘The Men Who Murdered Mohammed’, the ghosts being outside society reflects Lennox and Hassel’s similar external social positions as a result of writing themselves out of the timeline.[23] Lennox needing to confirm Hassel’s new place in reality reflects Sullivan’s need for the woman to perform this same function. The universal destruction that has led to the fact that ‘notheing is real becaus we are all dead’ indicates the mass destruction possible through nuclear war. Though a disease is said to be the cause of destruction, the situations are similar. Sullivan’s confusion regarding this universal death causes him to tell the woman that ‘you feel real to me’ (Bester, ‘Black Nebulea’, p. 51). Sullivan’s perception of the woman causes him to misidentify her as alive. This misidentification consequently causes him to misperceive his own state of being and therefore furthers the assumption that individuals rely on others for their own sense of identity.

A guessing game as the basis behind the story reinforces the duality between art and artifice which Bester later relies on throughout *Tender Loving Rage*. The anonymous nature of the publication allows Bester to play not only with his own identity but with the expectations of his readers regarding their presumptions of the authorial identity of the works presented to them. Bester’s childlike writing, however, both obscures and pinpoints his identity though his past writing. Bester mentions that others believe he writes himself into all his protagonists but regards this as an unpleasant proposition ‘considering how lunatic [his] antiheroes are’.[24] However, considering the assumption of the universal nature of the self, any realistically written individual would share characteristics of varying degrees with nearly everyone. By continuing discussions of the mirrored self, albeit unintentionally in this case, Bester further demonstrates how the pervasive nature of these considerations allows them to be repeatedly examined, regardless of the particular narrative or character.

[23] Alfred Bester, ‘The Men Who Murdered Mohammed’, in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 159-72.
[24] Alfred Bester, ‘The Pi Man: Introduction’, in *Starlight: The Great Short Fiction of Alfred Bester* (Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday, 1976), pp. 343-45 (p. 344).

IV.

Assumptions which affect perceptions of identity are continued in 'The Pi Man' (*Fantasy & Science Fiction*, October 1959).[25] Within the story, Bester explores assumptions regarding the Soviet Union and Communism by repositioning them in relation to other social concepts or institutions. When Peter Marko first realises he is being followed, he wonders, 'Who, this time? U.S.A.? U.S.S.R.? Interpol?' (Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 175). Not only does he suspect his own country before the Soviet Union, the agencies are grouped together as equals. As such, the Soviet Union is depicted as no more dangerous than the others. The United States as first in the list could indicate social fears regarding the domestic presence of spies within the United States. Accounts of the period describe the nation as one of paranoia, dread, spies, and informers which existed in a state of anxiety, suspicion, and confusion. With the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953 encouraging and reinforcing this atmosphere, the focus in this story on unspecific, non-national threats accentuates the pervasive sense of danger.[26]

When Jemmy Thomas asks Marko if he is Russian, she only does so out of curiosity. Realising Marko is being followed and needs to flee, she calls him a 'spy', but then immediately tells him, '"I'll go to the chair with you."' Thomas's dual reaction to Marko's potential nature simultaneously portrays the fear of the 'other' and false accusations. Marko's insistence that he is not a spy disappoints rather than reassures her. Thomas comments that '"It's too bad. A Commie 007 would be utter blissikins"' (Bester, 'Pi Man', pp. 183, 184). Her preference for a particular version of Marko despite Marko's real self indicates a desire for her artificial construction of him over reality. Artifice, as akin to false identities, is therefore externally encouraged, signifying social influence on the use of masks and the social impact on identity crises. By subverting the expected reaction of Americans towards Russians in the mid-twentieth century, the story indicates that perceptions of Russians are changing or should be changing. For example, when R. Sawyer, FBI interrogator, questions Marko regarding his ancestry, he does so in a similar manner to Thomas;

[25] Alfred Bester, 'The Pi Man', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 173-90. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[26] Christopher Newfield, 'Cold War and Culture War', in *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*, ed. by Paul Lauter (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 72-95 (p. 80); Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The US Crusade against the Soviet Union, 1945-56* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 142.

as a piece of information that is not dwelt upon, evidencing this acceptance even within the government.

In contrast with Bester's utilisation of 'Communist' to elicit fear in 'Will You Wait?', 'The Pi Man' focuses on the use of 'Russian'. Denying the mutual exclusivity of 'Russian' and 'Communist', this difference emphasises the separation of these methods of identification, especially as countries such as China would also identify as 'Communist'. This separation could reflect the impact of the passage of time on feelings towards the Soviet Union, as John W. Young writes that 'Cold War tensions had eased since […] the end of the Korean War in 1953'.[27] Therefore, post-Korean War understandings of the Cold War encouraged a suspension of aggression towards Russian as a nationality, though Communism, as the ideological threat behind the on-going Cold War, was still synonymous with the enemy.

Explorations of identity are continued throughout the story in regards to psychology and social position. Disparity between the internal and external self means that whom an individual claims to be and whom they actually are may be two different things, as with Bester's writing of 'The Black Nebulea'. Marko tells Thomas that he can show her his passport to prove his identity. Reflecting works such as 'The Men Who Murdered Mohammed' and 'Fondly Fahrenheit', the invocation of an official, government document as proof of identity indicates the perceived authenticity of official documentation.[28] Explanations that Marko's father shortened their surname from Markolevsky when they became citizens echoes Vandaleur's name changes in 'Fondly Fahrenheit' and reflects the use of names to both create a new identity and delete an old one. The assumed authenticity of government IDs is further seen when Marko is stopped by the FBI. When Special Agent Hildebrand shows his FBI badge, it is too dark to read, but they trust him anyway. The assumption that the FBI is safe rests on the assumption that the badge they have been shown is authentic. A reliance on 'official' paperwork to create a sense of self and maintain identification indicates the need for the self to be experienced in a particular way by external observers.

This focus on the importance of identification is contrasted by Marko's reference to Jemmy Thomas as 'Jemmy Thompson'. Indicating Marko's insistence

[27] John W. Young, *The Longman Companion to America, Russia and the Cold War, 1941-1998*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 1999), p. 140.
[28] Alfred Bester, 'Fondly Fahrenheit', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 91-111.

against building relationships, this misidentification reflects his fear that his compulsion for patterns will cause him to endanger others. Marko worked with Thomas for two months before learning her name and then promptly gets it wrong. Giving Thomas the wrong name gives her the wrong identity. Without the proper identity, it is implied that they could never be close, for the inner self would not match the outer self with which he would be familiar. Since Thomas self-identifies, at least partially, through her own name, an ignorance of that name indicates an external inability to identify her and therefore complicates one of the obvious connections (names) between self and external identification.

The compulsions which Marko explains as the reasoning behind his ignorance of Thomas's identity are the main focus of the plot. Marko finds himself compelled to respond to patterns and balance them out. He tells Sawyer, '"I'm moved by the patterns of people, individually and demographically […] And I'm compelled to respond and compensate"' (Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 187). As seen previously, being compelled is coupled with the unknown nature of the compulsions, reminiscent of *The Demolished Man*.[29] Marko says that he is compelled '"blindly, without motivation"' and tells Thomas that he knows what it is like for '"Something inside you, something you don't understand"' to compel action (Bester, 'Pi Man', pp. 177, 181). An unawareness of the internal, unconscious self furthers the assertion that man is not in control of his own mind and that psychological understanding is needed to recognise the actions and thoughts of the self. Similar to Ben Reich not knowing the real reason he murdered Craye D'Courtney, Marko recognises the overarching reason for his compulsions (to balance patterns), but he does not know the why. Thomas asks Marko if he has seen a shrink and Marko responds, '"I don't have to. I know what's compelling me"' (Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 182). Psychologists are thus implied to be more useful for 'what' compulsion an individual has but not for 'why' they have it, making understanding that compulsions exist more important than what causes them.

Marko's lack of self-control due to these compulsions materialises itself in various ways. One repeated compulsion is that of speaking a foreign language. The ability for language to be a source of identification is here subverted. Marko finds himself identifying with languages other than his native English, forcing him into an

[29] Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man*, intro. by Harry Harrison (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996).

identity he would not otherwise adopt. The connection with, and desire to speak, English reflects the obsession with the language in 'Travel Diary' and recalls concepts of social acceptance discussed therein.[30] Marko refers to speaking his native tongue as periods of 'lucidity'. Speaking English does make him lucid to those around him, but the term suggests a relationship with psychological disorders. Thus, identifying with the self, through language, equals 'sanity'. In speaking English, Marko is not experiencing an 'episode' in which his compulsions have overtaken him.

Bester emphasises the relation between environment and self in the story's introduction. Referring to the story as an extrapolation of 'environment on contemporary man', Bester examines how the self is affected by the influences of society.[31] Marko's self-isolation in order to avoid external patterns which would compel him is enacted through a series of jammers meant to jam 'the voice of the universe', which gives Marko 'a moment of peace' (Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 175). Isolation cuts Marko off from the rest of society and therefore protects him from external influence, reiterating *Who He?*'s discussion of the influence of society upon the mental state of the individual. Bester's use of extrapolation as a tool to place people in situations which 'produce colourful pressures and conflicts' explains the focus on Marko's reactions to patterns rather than focusing on the patterns themselves. As a result, scientific explanation is avoided in favour of the humanistic response to the situation.[32]

Marko references the uncontrollable nature of the self when he explains to Sawyer how people react to patterns.

> [P]eople respond to the 2/2 of the diurnal-nocturnal rhythms, the 4/4 of the seasons, the great terra-epochs. They don't know it, but they do. […] I respond to these local things, too, but also to gigantic patterns, influences from infinity.
>
> (Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 186)

[30] Alfred Bester, 'Travel Diary', in *Starburst*, pp. 110-13.
[31] Bester, 'The Pi Man: Introduction', p. 345.
[32] Bester, 'The Pi Man: Introduction', p. 344.

Though these external influences are natural rather than social, the implication that all individuals are unknowingly affected by them follows social theories that history itself follows a pattern. Social dynamics as following a teleological course reflects Marko's response to Thomas's accusation that he is just a '"tool of the universe"' by saying '"I think we all are"' (Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 189). Marko's reference to people as 'continuum creatures' echoes 'The Men Who Murdered Mohammed' regarding the universal continuum, though 'The Pi Man' indicates that individuals exist within a singular continuum.

Further exploring humanity's place in time and space allows Bester to advance considerations of the interactions between the personal and the universal. Ann Lane discusses history as a series of memories which are 'socially acquired and collective' and are consistently reshaped in order to fit contemporary thought.[33] Reorganising history to suit the present reiterates Marko's own reorganising of the universe to suit present patterns. Marko tells Sawyer that his recognition of patterns makes him '"part of something much bigger. I think we all are, only I'm the first to be aware of it"'. This obliviousness echoes notions of historical determinism and social unawareness of one's own situation. The inability to know or be aware of everything is echoed in Marko's statement that '"We're part of a world that's beyond knowing"' (Bester, 'Pi Man', pp. 188, 190). Unknowability is thus inevitable and understanding that there is such a thing as unknowability becomes a key feature of the self. The unknowability of the universe therefore reflects personal unknowability, further mirroring the social and the individual.

Marko's compulsions are often presented in the form of typographical patterns, as seen with telepathy in *The Demolished Man* and with synaesthesia in *The Stars My Destination*. For example, Marko relates part of the story while in Paris:

[33] Ann Lane, 'Introduction: The Cold War as History', in *The Cold War: The Essential Readings*, ed. by Klaus Larres and Ann Lane (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 1-16 (p. 15).

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Address: 49bis Avenue Hoche, Paris, 8eme, France
(Bester, 'Pi Man', p. 179)

Designed to emulate the Eiffel Tower, this demonstrates how Marko's compulsions reflect his environment and how Bester uses typography to portray this influence. Bester explains this usage in the introduction to the story.

> I've always been obsessed by patterns, rhythms, and tempi, and I always feel my stories in those terms. It's this pattern obsession that compels me to experiment with typography. I'm trying very hard to develop a technique of blending the sight, sound, and context of words into dramatic patterns. […] reading should be more than mere reading; it should be a total sensory and intellectual experience.[34]

Explaining the drive behind the synaesthesia portion of *The Stars My Destination,* Bester's comments connect his obsession with patterns with Marko's. Bester admits in the introduction that 'I must have been writing myself'. His comment that 'I'm people myself' feeds into the discussion of the universal nature of human compulsion within the story. Indicating the universality of the self, the interconnectivity between different aspects of the self is writ large in the story through Marko's attempts to balance interrelated patterns of the universe. Despite the negative affects it has on him as an individual, Marko's compulsions exert an influence which prioritises the social over the personal.

[34] Bester, 'The Pi Man: Introduction', p. 344.

Connections between Bester and Marko and the exploration of the universal nature of compulsions indicates this sense of universal neuroses. Bester writes in the that 'I believed that everybody could identify and vibrate with the harmonics of my own rhythmic obsession'. This assumption correlates with Bester's exploration of a universal psychology and the repetition of psychological states across individuals. As Bester comments, however, identification with the obsession of others 'is a classic symptom of lunacy'.[35] It becomes easier to identify with the 'lunacy' of others if all individuals share psychology. Mark Jancovich writes that 'psychosis […] is "*potentially* present within all of us", and worse than that […], we may be completely unaware of it'.[36] Being unaware of the potentially universal nature of psychological disorders, however, leads to concepts of the 'other' despite it being possible in all individuals. Though Bester asserts that society shares compulsions, how people react to these compulsions is what makes them individuals. However, Marko's destructive nature warns of the danger of attempting to enforce patterns which occur naturally for others, as the only ruinous individual seen in the story is Marko. His inability to form relationships or properly exist within society makes his obligation to the patterns of the universe supersede his responsibility to his self, thus endangering his personal identity by subsuming the self.

Marko's adjustment of patterns could be considered artificial balancing of the universe but 'The Pi Man' focuses more on continuing themes of the authenticity of identity perception by demonstrating a growing delineation between 'Russian' and 'Communist'. Identity is approached through the universal nature of individuals, as humanity is depicted as sharing a psychological construct that, while not uniform, is universal. The story's implications of collective compulsions or existence within patterns continues themes of the Cold War as collective neurosis as the individual placement within a grander scheme mirrors the personal and social split of political history. In addition, the recognition of the self and others through documentation and naming reflects assumptions regarding identity seen in earlier works. Furthermore, it recognises that the government exists within these assumptions as well, therefore furthering the understanding of separating the individual from the institution to which it ostensibly belongs, as with the separation of 'Communist' and 'Russian'.

[35] Bester, 'The Pi Man: Introduction', p. 345.
[36] Mark Jancovich, *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 288; Jancovich is quoting Andrew Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 187.

V.

Bester's movement between sf and mainstream literature caused P. Schuyler Miller to lament Bester's decreased output of sf, as his move away from the genre meant fewer works similar to those which Miller earlier praised. In his review of *Starburst* (*Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1959, May 1959 [UK]), Miller comments on Bester's 'respectable and too little employed talent' and later states that 'It's too bad Bester spends so much time […] making a living in television'. Though he calls this decision 'sensible', Miller hopes that Bester would produce another collection of quality science fiction. Miller refers to some of the works in *Starburst* as 'blandly mocking' but remarks that the mental borderline which Bester explores in his works is 'hard to forget'.[37] Whether this is because it is effectively explored or because of Bester's particular writing style in discussing it is unknown. However, Miller's comment that 'bright style' is the redeeming factor of 'The Roller Coaster' indicates that Bester's style may override his ideas.[38]

However, this overriding style could be the reason for the relative failure of *Tender Loving Rage.* Charles Platt comments that 'Bester was indelibly permeated with the ethos, the slang, the whole cultural flavour of the 1950s. […] His writing style and his persona were rooted so deeply in that period, he never really escaped from it'.[39] Platt reiterates this in his obituary for Bester when he claims that the novel was rejected partially because 'it was a non-genre novel containing slang and social milieu that were out of date'.[40] The negative reviews of the book could be a result of its publication over thirty years after it was written, making the society which it reflected no longer wholly relevant. However, psychology is arguably always relevant even if the situations in which it is discussed are not. Additionally, despite its setting, the novel remains a good consideration of anxiety over identity, self, and social interactions.

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[37] P. Schuyler Miller, 'Review: *Starburst*', *Astounding Science Fiction*, vol. 15, no. 5, May 1959, pp. 120-21 (pp. 120, 121, 120).
[38] Miller, 'Review: *Starburst*', p. 120; Alfred Bester, 'The Roller Coaster', in *Redemolished*, pp. 238-48.
[39] Charles Platt, 'Alfred Bester's *TENDER LOVING RAGE*', *Science Fiction Eye*, issue #9 (1991), pp. 30-33 (p. 32).
[40] Charles Platt, 'Alfred Bester, 1913-1987', *Interzone*, vol. 23, (Spring 1988), pp. 48-49 (p. 48).

Tender Loving Rage is an extended foray into discussions of compulsive patterns and the art/artifice divide. Though not published until 1991 due to repeated rejections, the novel was originally written around 1959.[41] The novel focuses on the interactions between two men, Win Canard and Nicholas Franklyn, and their shared attraction of model Julene Krebs. The clash between Canard and Krebs' careers within the television/advertising industry and Franklyn's job as research scientist encourages much of the psychological approach to 'in-groups' within the novel. 'In-groups' within the advertising industry mirror the Cold War concept of the 'other', and relocates it through characters' placement in, or understanding of, social divisions. Once the narrative moves to Fire Island, Bester introduces David Harrow and discusses psychological disorders through the contrasting senses of self derived from both accepting and denying one's psychology.

Mainly a satirical commentary on advertising, Platt considers the book to be a well-written mainstream novel by a science fiction author, though other reviewers were not so favourable. Alexander Jablokov, for example, considers Bester to have written some of the best science fiction of the 1950s but considers his mainstream fiction a failure. Jablokov believed Bester's writing strengths were specific to sf and that Bester's attempt at a clean break from sf was the cause of this failure, as he was unable to use the inventiveness with which he created his science fiction.[42] Jablokov perceives Bester's approach to psychology in the novel to be disappointing. Bester's ability to 'deform[] people's personalities through other-worldy skills' is mentioned as one of Bester's strengths, indicating that without the inventiveness of an sf universe, Bester's approach to extrapolating human behaviour is less successful. Jablokov comments that popular literature, which Bester aimed to penetrate with his mainstream works, often utilised 'a bait-and-switch where psychological detail is replaced by a button-pushing appeal to violent prurience'.[43] Bester's use of violent characters is not unique to *Tender Loving Rage*, as evidenced by Gully Foyle. Jablokov's dislike for the former but appreciation for the latter seems to stem from the situations in which the characters are placed, as Bester's extrapolations allow for an examination of the self in stress situations which exist outside reality.

[41] Platt, 'Alfred Bester's *TENDER LOVING RAGE*', p. 32.
[42] Alexander Jablokov, '*Tender Loving Rage* by Alfred Bester', *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, ed. by David G. Hartwell, vol. 4, no. 8 (1992), pp. 6-7 (pp. 6-7).
[43] Jablokov, '*Tender Loving Rage* by Alfred Bester', p. 6.

In discussing the relationship between mainstream fiction and science fiction, Bester comments that science fiction is 'only indirectly related to reality'.[44] Therefore, in contrast, mainstream texts must be directly related to reality. Ray Bradbury considers man's trials to be so great, 'they cannot be written about realistically'.[45] If psychology is as important as Bester portrays it, then, based on Bradbury's assertion, it is better suited to sf as a genre and explains Bester's inability to translate it to mainstream. Though themes of the psychological self are evident throughout *Tender Loving Rage*, they are less skilfully worked into the narrative, making them indicative of what Jablokov refers to as a 'cheat'. As a result, the majority of psychological discussion within the novel is literally a discussion between characters rather than an aspect of their actual personality. As Jablokov points out, this witty banter, though characteristic of Bester and often well done, is excessively used to tell, rather than show, psychological concepts and ultimately 'starts to cloy'.[46] However, the ideas remain indicative of Bester's previous works, as he continues to utilise dual identities and psychological exploration in order to examine the individual within society.

Psychology is mainly approached in the novel through the dual nature of humanity, which Platt points out is implicit in the juxtaposition of love and violence in the novel's title. The original title of the text as *Tender Loving Rape* reflects Bester's belief that it was not a 'terrible crime' but also, according to Platt, was specifically contrived in order to shock its audience. Platt further attributes the novel's repeated rejections to the title and the novel's callous approach to sex.[47] However, William Darby refers to rape as a 'traditional bestseller "thrill[]"'.[48] While this would seem to contradict Platt's explanation for the book's rejection, he clarifies that one publishing house 'was utterly opposed to the original title with "rape" in it' but not necessarily to the rape itself as portrayed in the novel.[49] In addition, Darby attributes the success of James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* (1951) to its 'open approach to sex'.[50] The duplicity between Bester's original title and the novel's

[44] Bill Bowers and Bill Mallardi, eds, *The Double:Bill Symposium* (Akron, OH: D:B Press, 1969), p. 32.
[45] Bowers and Mallardi, eds, *The Double: Bill Symposium*, p. 26.
[46] Jablokov, '*Tender Loving Rage* by Alfred Bester', p. 6.
[47] Platt, 'Alfred Bester's *TENDER LOVING RAGE*', p. 32.
[48] Darby, pp. 326.
[49] Platt, 'Alfred Bester's *TENDER LOVING RAGE*', p. 32.
[50] Darby, p. 365; James Jones, *From Here to Eternity* (London: Sceptre, 1998).

contents implies that while readers may enjoy sexual scenarios within a text, it should not be marketed as such, which could be evidenced by the desire for morality in mainstream literature. Though Bester also portrays rape in *The Stars My Destination*, its nature as sf blurs the realism of the act, unlike mainstream works which Bester claims deals with real individuals in real situations.

Early in *Tender Loving Rage*, Franklyn recognises Canard's personality as being comprised of multiple facets of and questions Canard's inner reality. Issues of inner reality are repeatedly returned to and echo the discussion of 'inwardness' in 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man'. Inner reality, as contrasted with the external self, produces concerns of being 'phony' or 'fake'.[51] Julene Krebs is especially concerned with these considerations as she admits to playing a number of roles in order to please others by presenting versions of herself she thinks others want. The continuation of this across multiple characters indicates the universal nature of this need to protect the self through external masks. A repetition of this character type on a psychological level indicates the novel's awareness that this trait mirrors 1950s' anxieties about identity, conformity, and authenticity. Though splitting the self is exploited by the characters as a defence mechanism, Freud considers this to contribute to personal anxiety, which is counterproductive if anxiety is what the split was designed to defend against.

Splitting the self, as Harrow does between his true self and the self shown to society, is done to evade arrest, hence its use as a defence mechanism. According to Freud, the ego is split between satisfying the self, which Harrow does through maintaining his authentic self internally, and acknowledging the danger of reality, which Harrow does by presenting a false self in order to protect against external forces. Acknowledging this danger while simultaneously ignoring it leads to anxiety which contributes to pathological symptoms.[52] This duality affects characters besides Harrow, as others also exhibit pathological natures or anxiety about the self in society. Furthering anxieties regarding authenticity of the self, the use of masks inherently requires the creation of a false self which is then presented to society. Darby's assertion that audiences desire to be 'reassured' by literature contrasts what he calls the 'unsettling possibility' that 'one can never be sure who is an enemy and

[51] This was previously discussed in chapter 4 regarding connections between Gully Foyle and Holden Caulfield.
[52] Sigmund Freud, 'The Splitting of the Ego in Defence Processes', in *The Penguin Freud Reader*, ed. and intro. by Adam Phillips (London: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. 64-67 (p. 64).

who is not'.[53] This anxiety reflects concerns over identity and authenticity which *Tender Loving Rage* manifests in the form of Harrow and Canard, as their multiple identities make it difficult for other characters to understand or predict their motives or actions.

Franklyn reconciles his selves by the end of the novel which makes him one of the few characters to recognise his disparity of self and aim to eliminate its destructive nature. Of the four main characters, Franklyn is the most psychologically stable. Though scarred from radiation poisoning after being exposed to bomb testing in the Pacific, Franklyn's embarrassment at breaking down over the incident does not produce a split identity. Though it is hidden from others, it does not alter his perception of self or its presentation. Franklyn's understanding of his self means he recognises his break down as a part of his identity and so neither represses nor sublimates the experience. The difference between Franklyn and other characters is that the situation which created this reaction no longer exists, whereas Krebs and Canard both still live within the social situations which caused their various identities. This appears to return to ideas of removing the self from society, such as in the ending of *Who He?*. However, the difference is that it is not a retreat or isolation from society as a whole but only from a specific destructive scenario.

Similar to the womb imagery found at the beginning of *The Stars My Destination*, Bester continues to associate safety from societal influences with the womb by equating it to home (*TLR*, p. 204). Canard's momentary isolation on Fire Island leads to revelations about the self, indicating the usefulness of removing the self from society in order to reconcile or understand the self. However, him meeting Death in his isolation continues to show Bester's interest in escape as equally destructive as what one is escaping from.

As a result of Franklyn's recognition of his own mental state, he is able to better understand the minds of others. As a result, Franklyn is able to ascertain Canard's psychology and leads him to accuses Canard of being similar to Harrow. Franklyn's claim of being able to judge Harrow's character comes from having experience with Canard and being able to recognise the repetition of patterns within human nature. His ability to do so most likely stems from his own mental stability which enables him to be an external observer and perform a role similar to that of a

[53] Darby, p. 16.

psychoanalyst. Canard and Harrow are compared both internally and externally, therefore eliminating similarities based purely on external social appearance. By including the shared internal state, Bester continues ideas of shared compulsions mentioned in 'The Pi Man' and establishes social patterns relating to psychology.

When Franklyn first meets Harrow, Harrow is wearing a hacking jacket. Canard's last appearance in the book also shows him wearing a hacking jacket, thus furthering the similarities between the two men. Canard remains unaware of his connection with Harrow when he asks Franklyn, '"Haven't you ever seen a hacking jacket before?"'. Franklyn's response of '"As a matter of fact I have"', underscores Canard's identity crisis (Bester, *TLR*, p. 245). Franklyn's position as external observer enables him to recognise the relationship between Harrow and Canard despite Canard's ignorance of his crisis. Within *Tender Loving Rage*, this cyclical imagery is utilised to discuss humanity's shared inner turmoil and the universal nature of compulsions.

Krebs' false accusation of Canard for her rape on Fire Island partly results from the fact that Canard did previously rape Krebs but also from a confused perception based on the similarities between Canard and Harrow. Franklyn explains Krebs' confusion to Canard by saying, '"Why did she imagine it was you? Because he did the sort of thing you'd do. He'll always follow your kind of pattern"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 214). Canard's violent reaction to Franklyn's implications of the similarities between him and Harrow reflects Canard's misunderstanding of his own self and reaffirms the 'aggressive individualism' Paul Boyer believes to be present in the atomic era.[54] Harrow is said to respond to crisis through 'attack-escape', which Canard also unknowingly demonstrates. Platt defines this concept as 'evading psychic danger by attacking its source'. Rather than confronting the issue Franklyn has pointed out to him, Canard continues to repress it, thus further hampering psychological understanding and reconciliation with his suppressed identity. Platt reveals that Bester often referred to himself as suffering from attack-escape, which furthers the identification between Bester and his characters as previously discussed.[55]

[54] Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 281.
[55] Platt, 'Alfred Bester's *TENDER LOVING RAGE*', p. 32.

Harrow's role within the novel can be analogised as Bester's mainstream version of Gully Foyle. They exhibit similar compulsions, sexually and violently, and suffer from a psychopathic self with unresolved identity issues. Psychopathic characters are regarded as a 'recurring figure in Bester's fiction' indicating Bester's repeated interest in aberrant psychology as his characters' main motivation. Platt comments that Harrow can be seen as the central character of the novel despite appearing quite late and encompassing the role of antagonist. Harrow's encounters with Canard and others on Fire Island are described by Platt as 'strip[ing] the civilized affectations from the other characters'.[56] Relative isolation removes the characters from the influences of the city and therefore allows deeper psychological examinations. With social influences stripped away, the characters are returned to their more base nature, demonstrated by Canard's obsessive reaction to freeing a trapped Franklyn on the jetty after attempting to rescue Krebs and arrest Harrow. Franklyn's comment that Canard is '"suffering from ruptured ego"' as an explanation for his erratic behaviour alludes to a split between Canard's ego and id (Bester, *TLR*, p. 230). That this split occurs after being removed from society implies that Canard's split has become clearer due to his social mask being stripped away.

While on Fire Island, Harrow misleads the others by claiming to be someone he is not. Harrow's fluidity of self is encouraged through his own actions and though he appears to exist within these multiple selves without an identity disorder, he is also the only character clearly suffering from a psychopathic nature. William H. Whyte, Jr. considers this social flaunting of multiple selves to be reparation for the knowledge of inner surrender.[57] Thus, Harrow overcompensates for social position by attempting to forcefully prove himself as independent. The presentation of this tension through a psychological disorder indicates the high level of mental repression of social influence. By not attempting to reconcile his selves or understand which self is authentic, Harrow is encouraging his disorder by embracing it, which is potentially as unhealthy as Canard's denial of his.

In turn, Harrow tells Franklyn that he is a director of pornography and a chess champion and Canard furthers this by saying that Harrow has been encountered as '"T.C. Tuttle, the Rams fullback, Wilmer Greenwich, Erik Flamstead, and the Marquis of Queensbury"' (Bester, *TLR*, pp. 193, 209). Harrow's

[56] Platt, 'Alfred Bester's *TENDER LOVING RAGE*', pp. 32, 30.
[57] Whyte, Jr., p. 10.

self-association with others shows his preference to identify himself through external connections, as previously seen in '5,271,009'.[58] While it may seem innocuous considering tendencies for individuals to, perhaps jokingly, comment on their own abilities by comparing them to professionals, Harrow's excessive use of this tactic warrants consideration that his own mental self is incapable of being individually sustained. When Harrow is cornered on the jetty, Captain Leary asks him, '"Are you David Harrow?"' to which Harrow responds, '"Frequently"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 228). Harrow's answer acknowledges his repeated use of other selves but recognises the difference between naming and presented identity.

Canard and Franklyn's ignorance of Harrow's multiple selves demonstrates how adept Harrow has become at hiding behind his masks. It is not until they recognise his multiple identities on Fire Island that they regard him as '"psychological"'. The ease with which Harrow employs his multiple selves makes an external observer useless as there is no authentic self on which to base psychological examinations. Canard's comment that no one would be able to recognise Harrow as psychological because he is a '"Nice looking guy"' validates the break between external and internal selves (Bester, *TLR*, p. 210). External misperceptions of others not only misidentifies the other but the self as well. Canard's initial inability to perceive Harrow as psychological reflects his inability to see his own psychology as abnormal. Harrow's confidence in his false selves being perceived as authentic indicates his reliance on others' misperception of his self. Harrow tells Krebs that before he located her he had to get rid of another woman explaining that '"She found out my real name and she took some handling"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 222). The safety Harrow feels when others are unaware of his true self is revealed in the lengths Harrow will go to in order to keep his true self a secret. However, his true self has been so fragmented through his multiple identities that his compulsive nature has led to this psychological state which the other characters fear.

When Krebs signs her name 'Julene Harrow' on the police statement concerning her rape, the men think it is a previous alias or a family name. However, what Krebs has actually done is inadvertently name her killer. The melding of her name with Harrow's demonstrates the fluid nature of both characters and reflects other mirrored/merged identities, such as Canard and Harrow. When Krebs is

[58] Alfred Bester, '5,271,009', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 56-90.

kidnapped by Harrow, it is revealed that Julene Krebs is a false name. Her original name is given as Jessie. Krebs tells Harrow to stop calling her Jessie as she no longer identifies herself by that name. '"I'm not Jessie anymore. I left her behind me"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 223). Different names defining different identities signals the connection between naming and identity as well as the assumption that changing a name will change the identity with which it is associated. Krebs' hiding the name change means there is an internal awareness of the difference and hiding it is a mask which further encourages an identity crisis. Once the men realise Harrow's identity and his relation to Krebs, Franklyn explains that in signing the statement, Krebs' '"unconscious took over and tried to tell the truth"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 209). The unconscious taking over recalls Bester's discussion in the introduction to 'Oddy and Id' and the exploration of internal drives directing individual behaviour.[59] The disparity between the conscious and the unconscious echoes concerns of the internal and external explored throughout the novel and the effect these multiple selves can have on the individual and their relation to society.

Alterations of the self echo conformity within 1950s' society in regards to attempting to fit in in order to be accepted. Repeated references to the 'other' within the novel reflect anxieties about the authenticity of those attempting to be accepted by indicating concerns about the internal nature of individuals. One reference aligns the 'other' with nuclear fission by highlighting anxiety over mutations and the resulting dividing line between the 'other' and 'normals'. The concern is raised that nuclear fission may '"break down the morality of […] people"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 52). Concerns that mutations may lead to a necessity for incest provokes more discussion than nuclear fission itself. As such, morality and human relationships are given precedence. Social obsession with morality is thus mirrored in the novel as a form of mimetic representation of the American public, as Darby explains that bestselling fiction often 'reassure[s] the audience that moral goodness invariably triumphs and lives into the future'.[60] The need for morality to continue despite potential nuclear annihilation indicates a preoccupation with what would occur after the dropping of the bomb which indicates an acceptance of its use in the first place.

[59] Alfred Bester, 'Oddy and Id: Introduction', in *Starlight*, pp. 242-44; Alfred Bester, 'Oddy and Id', in *Virtual Unrealities*, pp. 22-37. See chapter 1, section 1 for this discussion.
[60] Darby, p. 20.

In addition, when connected to considerations of the authentic self, it is implied that the 'other' could be one's own identity, as ignorance of one's consciousness could lead to confusion over the self. Colin Wilson considers the final problem facing the 'outsider', or 'other', to be 'Who am I?'. An inability to answer this question leaves the individual in a type of 'half-way house', leading to a 'tortured, self-divided nature'. Self-confusion could consequently lead to self-fear through the incapacity to completely know the self, essentially leaving the individual without an 'I'.[61] A lack of self-knowledge can lead to being unable to utilise one's true self, as it cannot be found by an individual. Often occurring as a result of the use of masks, the authentic self becomes repressed. While there is a separation in the novel between those who are 'psychological' and everyone else, this disparity becomes irrelevant when it can be seen that the majority of characters suffer from some sort of disorder, especially in terms of their relationship to society, thus causing psychological labelling to echo social separation of the self. When Canard tells Franklyn that they are lucky to be rid of Krebs because '"There's pathology implicit in everything she does"', he exposes his ignorance regarding his own pathology (Bester, *TLR*, p. 246). Canard's sublimated aggression and his presentation of self to others makes him just as pathological, since they both exhibit behaviour reflective of a split self.

This aversion to abnormal psychology indicates a desire to be accepted from not wanting to appear as the 'other' within society. However, if every individual contains compulsions, then, as seen with Canard, considering someone else to be the 'other' exposes one's own 'otherness', making 'otherness' a universal condition. William H. Whyte, Jr. writes that 'We are the victims of one another's façades', meaning that, if everyone is attempting to adjust to what they perceive as the 'norm', it encourages others to do the same to avoid being 'other', creating a universal feedback loop of artificiality. The very idea of normality is, therefore, a socially created illusion, which Whyte refers to as a 'great mutual deception'.[62] As such, Canard's desire to only keep company with those seen as non-pathological is actually futile, since underneath the exterior projection of 'normality' is an individual who still maintains some innate difference.

[61] Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1956), p. 153.
[62] Whyte Jr., pp. 195-96.

Explorations of keeping company only with particular individuals is performed throughout the novel in terms of those who are in the entertainment business and those who are not. The self-encouragement of these boundaries by those who have created them accentuate their influence. Though a career is a concrete boundary, as one either does or does not have it, those who are considered 'insiders' are often the ones who make the distinction important. When Krebs calls Canard a snob for viewing society this way, he responds, "I was consigned to outer darkness too long not to appreciate belonging to the in-group now" (Bester, *TLR*, p. 121). However, similar to his reaction to being compared to Harrow, Canard becomes angry when Franklyn refers to Canard's company as 'your people', despite Canard himself making the distinction between the 'in-group' and 'out-group'. Franklyn responds, '"Us and the civilians. Us against them *uitlanders*. Why not 'your people'?"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 15). Though Canard is happy to stereotype individuals outside his social circle, he dislikes the same being done to him. Canard is only able to understand the destructive nature of treating others as outsiders when he becomes subject to the same treatment. Despite this understanding, he continues to perpetuate ideas of 'otherness'.

Throughout the novel, the conscious presentation of a false self is shown to be a common infliction. However, it is most often presented in those connected to television. Franklyn's desire for the collapse of the American 'waste economy' is based on his belief that '"Waste is destruction"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 14). An excess of consumer goods implies that those individuals who sell themselves through self-promotion are also 'wasting' their value by doing so. If Randall Bennett Woods is correct in claiming that American society 'found its identity in products', then the relationship between individuals and consumer goods extends beyond buying and selling.[63] If products are wasteful, than by association, those purchasing them could be considered wasteful as well. Therefore, individuals who sell themselves as literal 'products' become subject to the same considerations of wastefulness and artificiality.

Franklyn's initial inability to tell the difference between Canard's artificial self and his real self speaks to the nature of the roles which individuals play and the incapacity to distinguish the internal self from the external. Canard claims that being

[63] Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 147.

able to play these role is a realistic aspect of his self and therefore not artificial and tells Franklyn, '"You suffer from the American syndrome […] you confuse art with artifice"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 15). The majority of characters and social relationships within the novel rely on some variation of an artificial self and the inability of others to tell the difference. Through these social relationships, Bester examines the artificial self's destructive nature towards the real self or its impediment to human relationships. Self-consciousness over society's perception of the self causes individuals to sell themselves as a particular thing in which they believe others will want to invest, tying into ideas of the self as commodity. The distinction between 'art' and 'artifice' becomes instead the art of artifice, as characters rely on effectively presenting a false self and therefore must artfully craft a convincing artificial self.

Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou regard the late 1950s as 'the era of the commercialization of art and the art of commercialization'.[64] Though they refer specifically to the advent of 'pop art', the assessment can be equally applied to advertising. Franklyn finds it unbelievable that one would aim to purchase 'artificiality' through capitalism, as it only serves to extend this artificiality to individuals. Bester reuses the idea of the 'good, clean, wholesome American' from *Who He?* to further examine advertising's ability to both present and influence the idealised American citizen. When Hundemann picks Krebs as the new Crystal Clear girl for his commercial, he refers to her as the image of Crystal Clear regardless of what she wears, implying her identity can be determined despite her external appearance. He explains she is 'pure' and any disagreement would imply '"something wrong with American morality"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 138). Connections between Krebs' appearance and morality reflects previous discussions of genetic mutations, further linking the physical self with a mental ideal. Advertisements thus sell more than just a product; they sell an idealised version of the American identity. This disparity between what is seen on camera versus off camera reiterates those roles which Krebs herself plays in her social relationships.

In addition, Canard as adman is reminiscent of Jordan Lennox. Bester seems to imply that it is the career itself which leads to destructive self-impulses and the abundance of masks worn by those in the industry. When Canard tells Franklyn he would make a good agency man, Franklyn responds, '"I know you mean well, but

[64] Paul Levine and Harry Papasotiriou, *America since 1945: The American Moment* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), p. 91.

that's no compliment"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 11). Bester's repeated use of the industry to display the forced artificiality of the self reinforces this negative view of advertising and the people who work in it. Jablokov's regard of the adman as 'a very 1950s [sic] concept' shows the general atmosphere in which Bester was writing considering the topical nature of televised advertising.[65]

By presenting a particular version of themselves, individuals mirror the industry as a whole through concepts of presentation and artifice. As individual psychology reflects the Cold War, the use of similar mirroring in regards to the physical self implies that the connection between the social and the personal is more than just mental. The discussion of whether Krebs' mole affects her ability to be the Crystal Clear girl prompts the explanation, '"Our housewives want someone they can identify with"', indicating the universal need for representation (Bester, *TLR*, p. 96). While ads are not likely to reflect or relate to everyone, the presumption of a relationship between the ad and those who would be swayed by it implies an easily influenced audience. The mole as imperfection implies that housewives with imperfections will feel a kinship with Krebs and thus buy the product in an attempt to be accepted, just as she has been. The desire for insider status therefore drives consumer choices more than the goods themselves.[66]

The relation between self-identity and material objects is made more explicit when Franklyn describes to Krebs an incident in which a rare shell was stolen from the museum. Franklyn's assertion that the thief was cheating the public by preventing them from experiencing the shell is rebutted by Krebs' comment that the shell has been replaced by a replica, of which the public is not made aware. Thus, she asserts that it is the museum cheating the public by presenting a false item as authentic, which reflects how false identities are presented to the public as authentic. The public thus believes they have experienced the shell but have actually not, indicating the discrepancy between external presentation and authenticity.

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[65] Jablokov, '*Tender Loving Rage* by Alfred Bester', p. 6.

[66] When polled in December 1959 about whether television commercials used 'untruthful arguments', 67% of respondents believed this to be so. This result indicates that the general public both believed in, and was aware of, the artificial nature of advertising. Yet, commercials were still an effective method of encouraging consumption. By participating in this artificiality, the consumer is encouraging their own dual self by purchasing what they know to be artifice under the pretense of genuine consumer desire. George H. Gallup, '1959', in *The Gallup Poll: Public opinion, 1935-1971*, ed. by William P. Hansen, Fred L. Israel, and June Rephan, 3 vols (New York, NY: Random House, 1972), III, pp. 1585-648 (p. 1644).

Franklyn comments to Krebs after their first meeting that he barely knows her because they have not spoken enough, therefore implying an inability to perceive someone's real identity based only on their external selves. Krebs' response of '"Do you mean to tell me you can't see me until you know what I'm like inside?"' indicates this disparity and references the suppressed nature of the authentic self. She continues by saying, '"That's ridiculous. Nobody would see anybody"' (Bester, *TLR*, p. 35).[67] Krebs' response acknowledges the inability for characters to know each other due to the universal use of masks. That the true self must be internal rather than external ignores any potential for harmony between external and internal or recognition of the self as a gestalt. If the external is not utilised as part of the authentic self, then the self will always be split.

However, Canard assumes that there is nothing real in an individual anyway, which is based on his belief that people are nothing more than the sum of their experiences.[68] Saul Bellow writes that experience is seen by 1950s' Americans as a valuable asset.

> For we really feel that experience is intrinsically valuable and we have the same acquisitive attitude toward it as toward other things of value. Experience can never be bad, we seem to believe; the more one has had, the better.

Bellow goes on to say that society as a collective needs 'psychiatrists, who deal […] with the confusions of experience'.[69] Though Canard lauds experience, he disregards his own psychology, thereby remaining ignorant as to how these experiences are affecting his internal self. This need for psychiatrists contrasts with social suspicion of psychology. A focus on the self throughout the novel prompts the repeated mention of Freud. However, it is often done in an offhand or otherwise joking manner. Those referencing Freud are facetiously referred to as 'doctor', implying the popularity of psychology and its use by the general public rather than certified psychologists. If, as Freud asserts, humour is a method 'created by the […] human

[67] This dialogue is indicative of what Jablokov considered a 'cheat' in terms of 'telling' rather than 'showing' psychology.
[68] See chapter 3, section 2 for a discussion of the mind as tabula rasa.
[69] Saul Bellow, 'Distractions of a Fiction Writer', in *The Living Novel: A Symposium*, ed. by Granville Hicks (New York, NY: Macmillian, 1957), pp. 1-20 (p. 9).

psyche to escape the compulsion of suffering', then joking about psychoanalysis indicates a desire to avoid psychoanalysis itself for fear of what undergoing therapy may reveal about one's self.[70]

Canard utilises his experiences to present false identities, which reflects his assumption that succeeding in the entertainment/advertising industry requires an ability to perform multiple roles. This is in opposition to Krebs, for, while she also utilises these roles, she is unable to control it. Krebs' changes occur through unconscious decision demonstrating that she is no longer purposefully utilising masks but is so ingrained in the expectations of society that they have become second nature. Switching selves has become part of her identity, thus making it inescapable. Krebs insists that most individuals in the entertainment industry want to be alike in order to know that they belong, therefore desiring acceptance through conformity. Canard's assertion that the entirety of New York could be switched with London or Tokyo and no one would notice reflects this conformity on a larger scale. William H. Whyte, Jr. contends that individuals are not interchangeable in the sense that they lack discernible differences, but rather that the 'externals of existence' unite individuals under a common culture.[71] As such, this interchangeability is not a distinctly Cold War idea but rather an aspect of contemporary society, which Alan Brinkley argues 'would have likely looked much the same […] with or without a Cold War'.[72] Whether this is true or not is a different matter, but the assumption explains the worldwide effects of social influence despite Cold War involvement. Therefore, Canard's assertion that whole cities could be switched rests on social considerations rather than political ones.

Canard's roles are seen in his sublimated aggression and misunderstanding of self which reflect the struggle between the conscious and unconscious as a result of artificiality. The novel repeatedly references a 'demon' within Canard which takes possession of him and can be seen to represent the obsession Canard has with his work, therefore equating the demon with advertising and reflecting the nature of the industry as Bester perceived it. Therefore, his possessed and unpossessed self remain

[70] Sigmund Freud, 'Humour', in *The Penguin Freud Reader*, pp. 561-566 (p.563).

[71] Whyte, Jr., p. 276.

[72] Alan Brinkley, 'The Illusion of Unity in Cold War Culture', in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. by Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), pp. 61-73 (p. 72).

separate, creating an identity crisis between Canard as individual and Canard as adman.

Canard's self-possession is also revealed in his idea of the 'anti-soul'. Another name for his possessed self, it is akin to the id due to its connection with Canard's passions. The id is displayed in the aggressive behaviour of many of the men in the novel, which Canard exemplifies through his sublimation of it into his behaviour towards women. The novel's assertion that '"We don't know how our subconscious works"' explains Canard's ignorance of his split self due to his lack of knowledge (Bester, *TLR*, p. 144).[73] When Canard is drunk on Fire Island and believes he has seen Death, he comments that he had previously been in psychoanalysis but considered it useless in the face of '"a world that needs more adjustment than I do"'. By existing in a society requires the use of masks, the individual cannot help but fall victim to its influences and sacrifice the self in the process. Canard's belief that all individuals suffer from an 'anti-soul' echoes Bester's assertions of the universality of compulsions. Furthermore, Canard comments that he cannot be purged of his 'anti-soul', implying the id is always with an individual (Bester, *TLR*, pp. 181, 179). The only way to control it, then, is to understand it and reconcile it with the ego or consciousness, which Canard and Harrow both disregard, hence their destructive natures.

Though *Tender Loving Rage* is ostensibly a repeat of *Who He?* from a different angle, the repetition of ideas indicates Bester's continued interest in the effect of television and advertising on the self. The repetition of themes of identity between both his science fiction and mainstream fiction demonstrates the universal nature of the ideas regardless of the intended audience. The novel's focus on multiple identities reflects the destructive nature of identity crises seen throughout his works, but here, Bester focuses the crises on individuals within a particular section of society and expands the condition beyond just the protagonist. Franklyn, as an 'outsider', ends the novel as the most stable, indicating the difficulties of reconciliation for those who refuse to recognise their multiple selves. Though Krebs does recognise her false identities, she remains split by the end of the novel; not through her own disregard, like Canard, but through her position in society. As such, the entertainment industry is shown to continue to exert influence on her which she

[73] This is another example of Jablokov's idea of the psychological 'cheat' in the novel.

has difficulty avoiding despite her knowledge of it. The reflection of contemporary 1950s' society through indications of conformity and consumerism accentuates discussions of self-reality in the face of falsely presented selves, both individually and through the idealisation of society through television and advertising.

VI.

A good example of Bester's utilisation of themes regardless of genre is 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space'; an sf work designed for a mainstream audience and originally published in *Holiday* (May 1960).[74] Though interested in realism, this article is a rather light-hearted satire of ship or plane travel projected into space. Designed to 'predict' the future for entertainment purposes, this article is similar in manner to Bester's *Fantastic* bio or comment on big decisions in 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man'.[75] With *Holiday* being a travel magazine, Bester was uniquely positioned to posit futuristic travel and the technological advancements of space tourism. The expansion of automobile ownership encouraged a mobile American society which 'transformed the tourist industry into a phenomenon of the masses'.[76] Therefore, discussions of travel become aligned with discussions of conformity, as previously seen in 'Travel Diary', and are reconsidered in this article as to how travel can encourage a new form of society.

Though space tourism is the subject of the article, the language employed can be utilised to examine the advancement of society and influence of external pressures on the self. Bester explains, 'Without gravity straining at you, you breathe easier, your heart beats gently, you feel wonderfully carefree' ('Gourmet Dining', p. 382). Though this statement can be taken literally, it can also indicate an escape from more than just the gravitational pressures of Earth. Contrasted with being 'anchored' to Earth, ideas that being on Earth and in society can restrain a person are furthered. While it cannot be said that this article is directly about conformity, it can be read as an exploration of removing the self from mass society. Tourism is a form of escape but is enacted in the company of other tourists, making it a conformed escape in

[74] Alfred Bester, 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space', in *Redemolished*, pp. 379-89. All subsequent references are to this edition and are placed in the body of the text.
[75] Alfred Bester, 'They Write…', *Fantastic*, vol. 2, no. 3, May-June 1953, p. 2. See chapters 2 and 5 respectively for discussions on these works.
[76] Woods, p. 134.

which one is still subject to social pressures, meaning this dual nature separates the act from the intention.

The ship's chef is said to not have to worry about the use of garlic on the ship as he has a 'garlicless garlic', a common sight in 'this age of caffeine-free coffee and nicotineless tobacco' (Bester, 'Gourmet Dining', p. 386). The reproducibility of items in which the item is both a copy and yet different from its original continues ideas of 'phoniness' and artifice. Similar to Philip K. Dick's *Ubik* (1969), Bester prefigures Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), as Bester's description recalls anxiety over the validity of everyday life and the absence of a confirmation of reality.[77] In addition, Baudrillard's order of simulacra mentions those that are created by machine through a system of production.[78] Bester's approach to consumer goods therefore anticipates Baudrillard's considerations of validity. The garlic, coffee, and tobacco Bester mentions are mass produced items which lose their authenticity twice over; for lacking a defining quality which links them to the original and for resulting from a culture of mass production.[79]

This scenario further demonstrates the internal/external divide and revisits ideas considered in *Tender Loving Rage*. Selling a product that is something other than depicted, even knowingly with these products, demonstrates the lack of inner reality explored in the novel. Ideas of the split self have now advanced to inanimate objects, as, for example, tobacco is still named as such but lacks the inner continuation of this identity as it does not contain the ingredient which makes it tobacco: nicotine. These products can thus be seen as status cues rather than a desire for the actual item. The dual nature of the product therefore reflects the dual nature of the consumer. To buy or use particular products in order to present a certain self is seen with Canard's purchase of a slide rule in *Tender Loving Rage*, which he admits he buys in order to 'fake' knowing how to use it so he can impress clients (Bester, *TLR*, p. 38).

Bester advances these dualistic contradictions more broadly when he begins attributing them to society in general. He describes passengers as 'eating in the old barbarian manner, with the fingers, but with a new space-age skill and delicacy'.

[77] Philip K. Dick, *Ubik* (London: Orion, 2006); Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014).
[78] Baudrillard, p. 121.
[79] The inability to validate reality can also be seen, for example, in Gertrude Stein's famous line 'there is no there there'. Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography* (New York, NY: Random House, 1937), p. 289.

Barbaric behaviour recalls discussions within *Tender Loving Rage* regarding male aggression and animalistic tendencies. Bester furthers this atavistic approach when he considers the future of space travel in approximately A.D. 2460 when jettisoned debris may begin to grow plant life, at which point 'spaceships on long journeys [could] stop[] alongside these fields to replenish supplies, like adventuring Vikings' ('Gourmet Dining', pp. 387, 389). The more advanced society becomes, the more Bester compares it to ancient civilisations. Irving Howe references Karl Marx when considering 'victories of progress', saying that they 'seem bought by the loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men'.[80] A loss of character could easily lead to the lack of inwardness Bester laments in hack writers as well as connecting the advancement of society with social imprisonment via conformity. That space pollution may eventually create new life gives hope for destructive identities which may only require reconciliation to be born again, as seen with Gully Foyle. However, it also questions the validity of expanding society past Earth when it still has social adjustments to make, hence the depiction of pollution.

Bester's futuristic look at space travel recalls Mary McCarthy's comment that 'the only hope is space'. Though she specifically discusses the concept in regards to equality, ideas that society must move beyond Earth in order to start anew are relevant here. However, social pressures as a feature of society mean that wherever societies are established, those pressures will also remain.

> [T]he most energetic – in the bad sense – elements [of society] will move on to a new world in space. The problems of mass society will be transported into space, leaving behind this world as a kind of Europe, which then eventually tourists will visit. The Old World.[81]

These 'most energetic elements' would likely be those that are most influential or widespread. For the 1950s, these would likely include conformity, fear of the 'other',

[80] Irving Howe, 'This Age of Conformity', in *The Partisan Review Anthology*, ed. by William Philips and Philip Rahv (New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1962), pp. 145-64 (p. 157); Howe is quoting Karl Marx, 'Speech at Anniversary of the *People's Paper*', in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, 3 vols (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), I, p. 500.
[81] Elisabeth Sifton, 'Mary McCarthy, The Art of Fiction No. 27', *The Paris Review*, no. 27 (Winter-Spring 1962) <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4618/the-art-of-fiction-no-27-mary-mccarthy> [accessed 5 October 2015].

and the potential for nuclear war. These 'problems', as McCarthy calls them, would be removed from Earth by remaining with the majority of society who presumably would leave for space. Use of the word 'hope', however, implies that a new start for society could erase some of these problems, thus taking them from Earth but not continuing them in space. The New and Old Worlds could then be free of those pressures and become as carefree as Bester depicts his space tourists.

Though perhaps intended as little more than a speculative and humorous travel piece, 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space' still espouses views and themes commonly found in the rest of Bester's writing. Contradictions of duality and the positioning of a microcosm of society outside mass society allows for considerations of human behaviour despite locale. Using space to examine the regeneration of the self and society through rebirth has been depicted by Bester before, most notably in 'Adam and No Eve' (1941), but rebirth is indicated in many of Bester's works through womb imagery and experiences of the self.[82] The freedom from societal pressures which space has the potential to give accentuates the social influence Bester often explores. Proposing space travel as a possibility for expanding society (akin to Foyle's hopes with jaunting in *The Stars My Destination*), implies a hopeful outlook for mankind and a belief that society can move past its current 'problems'.

VII.

Bester's literary context often reflects similar ideas despite different approaches, indicating a contemporary atmosphere concerned with self-anxiety and the society in which it resides. Bester's opinions on this literary environment are seen in his articles and non-fiction but are directly espoused in his book reviews. Between 1960 and 1962, Bester wrote a review column for *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. His first entry was published October 1960, in which he encouraged engendering harmony between science fiction and fantasy.[83] He claimed his reviews column would entertain any fiction that is 'a Flight of Fancy' and that genre was less important than the imagination of the author. Thus, he criticised the small-mindedness of those who

[82] Alfred Bester, 'Adam and No Eve', in *Virtual Unrealities,* pp. 273-86.
[83] Alfred Bester, 'Books', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 4, October 1960, pp. 92-94.

argued against books not fitting a particular genre definition.[84] Attempts to erase literary barriers reflects his guest editorial for *Science Fantasy* in which he similarly criticised the perceived separation of British and American science fiction.[85]

In his column's introduction, Bester declares that the reader should welcome various common themes from speculative fiction, including 'any arresting concept' based on 'a cultural conceit'.[86] Arresting concepts continues Bester's ideas from 'Science Fiction and the Renaissance Man' and his reference to sf as 'arrest fiction'.[87] By encouraging the reader to focus on cultural issues, Bester continues to move his discussions of human nature and the purpose of sf out of his own writing and into his non-fiction by directly relating it to his contemporaries. For example, he praises Judith Merril for reminding readers of the importance of basing science fiction on human values.[88] This is perhaps the strongest relation with Bester's works based on his aim to make his extrapolations mainly people-orientated, indicating that Bester was working on similar concerns as others, albeit through a different approach.

Bester later comments in his November 1960 column that sf has begun to lack factual detail and is 'why professional science fiction authors have lost some of their hold on the public today'.[89] By distancing themselves from realism, Bester is implying that authors are no longer creating worlds in which individuals could realistically imagine themselves. As a result, extrapolations of humanity become less serious and the imagined futures less believable. As previously discussed in Bester's *Venture* editorial, the inability to imagine mankind in that future means an inability to explore how that future would impact and influence the individual.[90]

Bester's approach to sf through the vehicle of humanity is furthered in his December 1960 review in which he discusses James Blish's methods of

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[84] Bester, 'Books', October 1960, p. 92.
[85] Alfred Bester, 'What's the Difference?', *Science Fantasy*, vol. 4, no. 12, February 1955, pp. 2-5. See chapter 3 for a discussion of this editorial.
[86] Bester, 'Books', October 1960, p. 92. By 'conceit', Bester means an artistic effect or device in which something which appears one way from a distance, appears differently close up.
[87] See chapter 5, section 1 for this discussion.
[88] Bester, 'Books', October 1960, p. 94.
[89] Alfred Bester, 'Books', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 5, November 1960, pp. 90-93 (p. 91).
[90] Alfred Bester, 'Venturings', *Venture Science Fiction Magazine*, vol. 2, no. 2, March 1958, pp. 4, 130. See chapter 5 for this discussion.

characterisation.[91] Claiming that Blish's 'characters lack emotion, conflict, reality', Bester perceives it to be 'impossible to believe in them, feel for them, identity with them'. Again indicating the need for a realistic approach to humanity, Bester asserts that Blish 'refuses to conceive of a story in terms of human values'.[92] As Bester's book reviews are comprised of his personal opinions, the quality of Blish's work is not under consideration here, but this criticism demonstrates Bester's determination in his approach to depicting the human in 1950s' science fiction.[93]

Bester's belief in his approach is demonstrated in his praise for other authors who realistically utilise the human individual. Despite these similarities, Bester has not praised authors for their use of identity crises to discuss society, indicating that though strong characterisation is a feature in some science fiction, identity crises are not, thus singling out Bester's particular approach to the human. In encouraging Blish 'to abandon intellect and take to drink, drugs, seduction, crime, politics', Bester believes that it will 'shock him into experiencing the stresses that torture people'.[94] Recalling the universality of compulsions and anxieties, Bester stresses that in order to understand the human, this universal nature must be experienced and accepted.

Through Bester's reviews, one can see themes and ideas presented throughout Bester's own literature praised in the works of others. Despite the move to a mainstream magazine and a reduction in his sf production, considerations of the self and its position in society were still key. Though Bester's approach to sf is not the only one and does not exclude quality in other approaches, these similarities reveal that Bester was not presenting these concepts in a vacuum. Rather, he was part of a broader literary context, making his approach original but the concepts discussed therein a feature of the general literary atmosphere.

[91] Alfred Bester, 'Books', *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, vol. 19, no. 6, December 1960, pp. 70-73.
[92] Bester, 'Books', December 1960, p. 70.
[93] It should be noted that, despite this criticism, Bester does refer to Blish as having 'formidable talent'. Bester, 'Books', December 1960, p. 71.
[94] Bester, 'Books', December 1960, p. 71.

Conclusion

With four novels, numerous short stories, essays, articles, editorials, and book reviews, the 1950s outweighs the rest of Alfred Bester's career in terms of works produced. Ending the 1950s as a books review editor for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Bester continued to publish essays and short stories beyond the end of the decade but his next full-length novel would not appear until 1974/5.[1] Overall, the 1950s remains not just his most prolific decade, but also the only one in which he wrote non-sf novels.

Through these works, as presented within this thesis, Bester's approach to psychological identity has been shown to be particularly designed in order to demonstrate certain aspects of the individual. Specifically, Bester's approach to psychology develops and foreshadows the growing awareness that the individual may not be in control of their own mind. The self is portrayed as inherently split between personal and social identity and Bester's approach asserts the need to reconcile these two aspects in order to prevent a loss of self, conformity, or social isolation. Through exploration of the universal nature of compulsions, psychology, and social influence, this thesis proposes that Bester's works suggest an understanding of psychology is needed in order to break down barriers of the 'other'. The representationally split self of the individual identity crisis creates a private depiction of Cold War fears between 'us' and 'them' as reflected by 'self' and 'society'. The individual loss of life through the absence of identity resulting from social consequences of the Cold War connects the political with the personal through the psyche. As such, it indicates Bester's accentuation of the Cold War as collective neurosis through identity crises which mirror Cold War psychology against individual psychology. In addition, by exposing these concepts throughout his writing, Bester is shown to insist on the importance of taking human characters seriously as concrete concepts in fiction regardless of mimesis or extrapolation, which both his fiction and non-fiction has expounded.

This thesis has contended that Bester's mirroring of the Cold War with psychology demonstrates the relationship between the social state of tension, anxiety, fear, and pressure and the human nature of psychology that produces and

[1] Alfred Bester, *The Computer Connection* (New York, NY: ibooks, 2004).

reinforces these reactions. In addition, nuclear weapons reflect the potentially destructive effect of society on the self, which imitates the potential of nuclear attacks to destroy individual lives. By demonstrating how these features of the Cold War and the self reflexively affect each other, as Bester portrays them, this thesis has indicated the significance of Bester's approach by designating that he is worth examining for his explorations of psychology and identity through the split self. Bester's mirroring of the Cold War and psychology has shown the symbiotic effect of tension between internal mentality and external physicality through the use of masks and subterfuge as similarly employed by the Cold War state through television, advertising, and propaganda. Psychology and literary psychoanalysis are already popular avenues of critical examination but the specific model utilised within this thesis produces a particular approach to a historically contextual psychology. In examining Bester's works within this context, the relationship between the private individual and public society has been shown to create a fluid identity specific to Cold War psychology.

Differences in the exploration of psychology and identity can be specifically defined between Bester's mainstream and sf novels, which the juxtaposition of these novels within the 1950s enables. Though the aspects of psychology and identity examined in each genre are indistinguishable, the deviation in methods could be explained based on the allowances for extrapolation afforded by each genre. However, this deviation could also be attributed to Bester's considerations of which aspects of the self are available for exploration. Both mainstream novels surveyed in this thesis examine the self as formed within the television/advertising industries, whereas the sf novels examine the self within society in general. As such, the mimetic approach to a contemporary aspect of society allows for realistic portrayals of the psychological self in a society recognisable to the general public.

In contrast, the extrapolation allowed by sf presents an opportunity to examine the long-term effects of contemporary concerns. Extrapolation beyond the 1950s permits a futuristic consideration of psychology and the effects of a society which is yet to exist, demonstrating the continued interaction between the public and the personal. By examining Bester's non-sf in conjunction with his sf, it has been shown that though the use of extrapolation has differed, the overall approach to the topics explored have not.

Therefore, the universal nature of Bester's interests is similar to the universal nature of psychology which he posits he shares not only with others, but with his characters as well. Circumstances, disorders, and responses may vary based on things such as genre or locale but since psychology is an internal human feature, as long as a text employs human or human-like individuals, psychology remains a valid approach to characterisation. Consequently, whether approached mimetically or non-mimetically, the examination works from the same basis.

Further, Bester's approach to psychology between his fiction and non-fiction can be seen in the intended audience of his works. His non-fiction writing can be seen as attempts to portray what he believes sf should be focused on to other writers more than readers, through a continuous desire to engender a particular sense of humanistic characterisation in writing. In contrast, Bester's fiction, mainly by its very nature, is aimed at the reader and designed to stimulate considerations of personal psychology. Explorations of psychology through characters' struggles with identity crises and the split self depicts the importance of psychology and the human character in a manner which the expository nature of essays and articles cannot fully achieve. Bester's fiction is thus essentially the opinions of his non-fiction put into practice.

Though Bester's focus on characterisation and Freud gives a particular significance to his approach to writing, the themes themselves are also employed by both American sf and the mainstream in the 1950s. Unlike Bester, authors such as Philip K. Dick could be said to utilise extrapolation to serve purposes separate to that of their mainstream work. *Mary and the Giant*, as briefly discussed in chapter four, examines ideas of pressure and tension that could be said to relatively differ from the philosophical discussions of the self and existence primarily seen in his works of sf. In either case, the self is still a consideration, but is less myopically approached. In addition, other works such as *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Catch-22* could be analysed in regards to their approaches to the psychology of authority's place in society.[2] This is similar to, but differs from, Bester's approach to elites as Bester considers social position more than authority itself. What these works demonstrate is that, while the themes are common, the approach is not.

[2] Philip K. Dick, *Mary and the Giant* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1988); J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (London: Penguin Books, 2010); Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (London: Vintage Books, 1994).

Bester's distinctive approach to identity crises is important not only for its singularity but for the particular conclusions which it allows. Bester chooses his approach to psychology in order to portray what his non-fiction stresses, therefore allowing for an analysis not only of Bester's fictive use of psychology but for how his non-fiction assertions can be, or are, achieved. Many of Bester's contemporaries mentioned within this thesis utilise to some degree psychology, consumerism, or the Cold War to discuss the individual and their place in society, indicating the cultural response to the political and social situation. The examination of the self and social psychology within Bester's work indicates how ideas of normality are obtained, socially and psychologically, and whether the concept of 'normal' can be accurately applied in any situation. Bester's utilisation of the split self as an inevitable result of the dissonance between the public and private self implies this psychological crisis could be considered 'normal' despite the social insistence that a lack of control over one's unconscious is indicative of the 'other'. Thus, the collective delusion of normality and social acceptance can be determined through Bester's extrapolation of identity, furthering the relationship between social psychology and the individual self.

Psychological identity as both created and destroyed by the self and society within Bester's work has been shown to lead to the identity crises often suffered by his characters. Demonstrating the 'normality' of the 'other' through psychology is symptomatic of Bester's prevailing notion that the growing awareness of the inability to know one's own mind indicates the opposite of an identity crisis by leading to self-knowledge and understanding of one's place in society. Thus, psychology within Bester's work operates on two planes: that of the misunderstood 'other' unable to reconcile their mental interior with that of their physical exterior and that of the knowledgeable member of society who recognises the use of psychology in enabling a harmonious coexistence with their external self. By utilising this separation between crisis and harmony as a microcosmic version of the Cold War, Bester has been shown to demonstrate the inherent similarities between the private individual and the social political spheres.

With the political repercussions of conformity and consumerism on the individual, this reflective representation encourages an understanding between programmed and emergent behaviour. The use of masks to portray a particular self to society indicates programmed behaviour encouraged through conformity and

consumerism in an attempt to depict the patriotic American. The potential conflict of this behaviour with the emergent, arguably more naturalistic, behaviour of the unconscious self emphasises the disconnect between the external and internal selves and cements the overwhelming impact of the Cold War's creation of the 'American identity' on the innate self. Though genre offers different avenues of psychological exploration, all have the potential to contain, in some form, the self in society and, even if not explicit, the separation between internal and external selves. Bester's examination of the self in society has been shown to exhibit the inherent split proposed between personal and social identity. As such, the self in society indicates that individual psychology is inevitably influenced by social psychology, causing the Cold War to have an irrevocable impact on the individual.

Explorations of psychology as a key tenet of the individual places Bester in a position to aid the literary foreshadowing of society's recognition of its importance as an aspect of the self as well as indicating the cultural environment he was mirroring through his own attitudes to the subject. Thus, Bester may be more explicit than most in his direct approach to identity crises and the split self. Considering his attention to psychological numbing and offhand usage of nuclear destruction, though, his direct approach to the tangible effects of abstract psychology mirrors the tangible effects of the abstract notion of nuclear weapons, as something which is only recognisable through its effect on the self.

With the psychological approach continually available and humanism as constantly relevant, exploration of the self and its place in society is nearly always applicable regardless of genre, period, or nationality. Another novel which approaches similar themes is Christopher Isherwood's *A Single Man* (1964), for example, which demonstrates the protagonist's progression of selves in a manner open to analysis similar to that of Gully Foyle's.[3] The novel as a whole would critically benefit from an extensive examination of the various versions of the self which the protagonist embodies as the result of his social interactions throughout the novel. Though not written by an American, the novel performs a similar function to Bester's use of the self, thus further demonstrating the universality of psychology upon which Bester insists. With the added aspect of the novel's setting being California, the American Cold War identity remains a consideration and the model

[3] Christopher Isherwood, *A Single Man* (London: Vintage Books, 2010).

embodied by this thesis becomes a valid avenue of approach for distinguishing differences or similarities between American and non-American approaches to political reflections of psychological identity.

Though the model developed within this thesis was designed as a useful and explanatory method for approaching Bester's employment of identity crises, it is not inherently Bester-specific. As Christopher Isherwood's novel shows, with little to no modification, the model of the Cold War as collective neurosis (as a mass representation of individual psychology) could be transplanted to other texts of the 1950s or Cold War society in general. Not all works will fit the model as not all writings utilise themes intrinsic to its application and some texts may counter analytical assumptions upon which the model is based. However, this should not be deemed a failure of the model for it offers opportunities of analysis as to why an author creates the response they do and how their particular contribution to the literary field reframes or redefines ideas of Cold War psychology as part of an overall discussion.

Though Bester has produced more than what is covered in the course of this thesis (especially considering its remit is restricted to the 1950s), the main constraint on thoroughness is the limited availability of Bester's writing. This particularly applies to works published in magazines which are now obsolete and/or hold no official archive of their material, such as *Rogue,* in which Bester published a regular column entitled 'Bester's World', and *Holiday*.[4] Though since relaunched, the original *Holiday* magazine remains defunct, making Bester's contributions less accessible, except for those reprinted, such as 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space'.[5] Though works are not completely inaccessible, the difficulty of obtaining them could account for their lack of critical examination. In addition, any film, television, comic, or radio works were not considered for this thesis as the scope was limited to Bester's literary output. Regardless, Wendell claims that Bester's 'radio and television scripts are both numerous and nearly impossible to locate.'[6] Similarly, the limitation to Freudianism was based on Bester's own focus on the subject which encouraged a Freudian-based analysis of Bester's use of psychological identities.

[4] Carolyn Wendell, *Alfred Bester* ([Rockville, MD]: Wildside Press, 2006), p. 11.
[5] Alfred Bester, 'Gourmet Dining in Outer Space', in *Redemolished,* ed. and intro. by Richard Raucci (New York, NY: ibooks, 2000), pp. 379-89.
[6] Wendell, pp. 11, 63.

Subsequently, additional areas of potential further research have been identified through conducting this thesis. Alfred Bester as a writer could be afforded a vast amount of further research considering the little currently available on him. Though often deemed influential or significant in shaping sf literary movements, Bester remains under-criticised. In addition, research into Bester and the sf field have flagged up the potential for examining sf without focusing on it as a genre. Rather than discussing sf as a particular and separate mode of writing, it could be further examined for its contribution to, and existence within, mainstream literature. Though sf has been examined for its attempts to employ mainstream themes or for the advancement of sf magazines into mainstream literary importance, these avenues of research are more focused on the field of sf and its movements rather than individual authors or works. The treatment of sf as mainstream would allow for comparisons between literary works which do not rely on its genre as the key distinctive feature.

Though sf and mainstream obviously differ in regards to extrapolation, as a result of the research conducted here, it has become clear that the basic approaches to humanity are often repeated; psychology, identity, and anxiety are not genre specific. As this research has been conducted in a decade which specifically conveys these themes, it is not surprising that authors regardless of genre would utilise them in their writing. However, a comparison taken out of the decade or across international borders could open up investigations of how wide-spread or similar these approaches are. In terms of expanding criticism on Bester himself, results produced or research conducted could be taken out of the decade as well and used to trace Bester's own evolution of ideas, particularly psychology, beyond the 1950s. Both prior and subsequent publications to the 1950s would allow for an extension of this research beyond the chronological framework established here. As well, Cold War politics could be expanded to the end of the Cold War or even after, as ideas and reactions have lasted beyond the end of the conflict.

In addition, criticism of the Cold War and related culture examined for the purpose of this thesis, though broad, has been largely focused on the nuclear. Nuclear fictions are an obvious result of the Cold War and psychological numbing, though approached in a particular manner, is no more an exclusive topic to Bester then is the potential for nuclear holocaust. However, other forms of anxiety, though examined, are not as fully explored, such as McCarthyism. Though novels such as Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* utilise conformity and fear as a main tenet of

its approach and has been looked at for its relation to McCarthyism, the wider consideration has been on Communism rather than domestic concerns.[7] As such, Bester's distinctive approach to the self, though examined within the Cold War state, is more domestic than political, thus utilising similar topics but approaching them with a different focus.

What has become clear as a result of the research conducted for this thesis is how much criticism remains unaware of subjects which are known but never discussed. Bester remains a key example of this discrepancy as he is known and referenced but not often examined in extensive detail. The assumption that the author and reader are aware of his importance appears to exclude the need to define or expand on that importance. As such, this thesis has aimed to rectify this absence of discussion by demonstrating Bester's significance in reflecting 1950s' society and drawing cultural comparisons between the self and the state. By examining the Cold War as collective neurosis, this thesis has demonstrated Bester's awareness of social psychology and the crisis of identity the self is apt to undergo through this social/individual split, as attempts to maintain a dual self are shown to create more destruction than harmony. By portraying this psychological importance, Bester has been shown to expand upon the decade's superficial interest in Freud by foreshadowing the growing awareness in the general public that the individual is not fully in control of their own mind and the sociological influence imposed on the self as a result of the Cold War state.

[7] Robert Heinlein, *The Puppet Masters* (London: Pan Books, 1969).

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